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CARLO ROSSELLI
SOCIALIST HERETIC AND ANTIFASCIST EXILE

by

Stanislao Giambattista Pugliese

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The City University of New York
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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty
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ABSTRACT

CARLO ROSSELLI
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Stanislao Giambattista Pugliese

Adviser: Professor Bernard Semmel

Carlo Rosselli (1899-1937) was one of the most important protagonists of the antifascist struggle in Europe. Born into a family with strong ties to the *Risorgimento*, Rosselli abandoned a promising career as a professor of political economy to devote himself to the antifascist cause. In 1925 he was instrumental in creating one of the first underground publications, *Non Mollare!*; the following year he directed a more theoretical journal, *Il Quarto Stato*, which sought a renewal of Italian socialism. Rosselli's critique of Italian liberalism, socialism and Marxism challenged accepted theoretical positions and common assumptions. This study examines Rosselli's attempt to re-define European socialism after the rise of fascism. Central to his thought was the desire to overcome the theoretical antagonism between liberalism and socialism--hence his unique formulation of a "liberal socialism."

Rosselli was also a man of action, believing that fascism could be defeated only through an active, revolutionary and "illegal" movement. In 1929 he managed a daring and dramatic escape from prison to Paris where he founded the antifascist movement *Giustizia e Libertà*. From Paris, Rosselli continued his

analysis of Italian socialism and the rise of fascism. When the Spanish Civil War broke out in the summer of 1936, he was in Catalonia within weeks organizing a volunteer force to defend the Republic. In June of 1937, he was assassinated, along with his historian brother Nello, by French fascists on orders from Mussolini.

As an intellectual biography, this work seeks to integrate Rosselli's ideas with his political activism; indeed, he himself stated that the two were inseparable. His various types of writing--political, autobiographical, theoretical and even literary--are examined in detail through three interpretive keys: heresy, exile, and tragedy. I argue that Rosselli's critical stance and theoretical formulations were more radical than previously thought and offer insights into a contemporary re-visioning of the socialist tradition.

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From its inception, this dissertation has benefitted from the comments, suggestions and insights of teachers, friends and colleagues. Bernard Semmel was a wise and patient teacher while Frank Rosengarten introduced me to the history of Italian antifascism. Daniel Gasman clarified ideas on the positivist tradition; Mary Gibson suggested a re-examination of the nature of biography and my relation to the subject; John Cammett reminded me of the theoretical sophistication of the Italian Communist tradition--something which might have escaped Rosselli.

I am indebted to the History Program at the Graduate School of the City University of New York for intellectual and financial support; a three-year fellowship allowed me to pursue my studies and live in New York City, truly "the cross-roads of the world."

In Italy, I was fortunate to meet and interview John Rosselli, Carlo's eldest son; his warmth and generosity are gratefully acknowledged. I must thank Dr. Giovanni Verni and the staff at the Istituto Storico della Resistenza in Toscana in Florence for their assistance and Dr. Pietro Polito at the Centro Gobetti in Turin for his sincere interest in this project. Professor Giorgio Spini of the Università di Firenze; Dr. Costanzo Cassuci, former Director of the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome; and Professor Aldo Giarosci all granted me interviews that revealed a wealth of information.

At Hofstra University, I must thank my former teachers (now colleagues) Jack Moore and, especially, John T. Marcus who demonstrated a deep respect for the life of the mind and inspired in me a love of teaching. Pellegrino D'Acierno guided me through the labyrinths of modernism and post-modernism, while the late Thomas Belmonte revealed to me the tragi-comedic nature of modern Italy. It seems appropriate to return to the place where, as a young student, I first discovered the seduction of history and its attendant joys and sorrows.

My family has never yielded in its support and encouragement; my parents, Angelo and Lena, remain the best of teachers while assorted relatives and in-laws have sustained me with good wishes and good food.

This work is dedicated to Jennifer Romanello, whose memory and desire made it possible.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT AND FOOTNOTES

- ACS Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero Interno, Direzione Generale, Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Polizia Politica, Rome.
- AGL Archivio di Giustizia e Libertà, in the ISRT, Florence.
- APC Archivio del Partito Comunista, Rome.
- BNF Biblioteca Nazionale Firenze.
- CA Concentrazione Antifascista.
- CGL Confederazione Generale di Lavoro (General Labor Confederation).
- CPC Casellario Politico Centrale (Central Political File), Rome.
- FR Fondo Rosselli in the Biblioteca Nazionale Firenze.
- GL Giustizia e Libertà, founded in Paris (1929) by Carlo Rosselli.
- GL* The newspaper *Giustizia e Libertà*.
- INSMLI Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione in Italia, Milan.
- ISRT Istituto Storico della Resistenza in Toscana, Florence.
- LIDU Italian League for the Rights of Man.
- PCd'I Partito Comunista d'Italia (Communist Party of Italy; PCI after 1943).
- PRI Partito Repubblicano Italiano
- PSI Partito Socialista Italiano (Italian Socialist Party).
- PSLI Partito Socialista dei Lavoratori Italiani (Italian Socialist Workers' Party).
- PSU Partito Socialista Unitario (Italian Socialist Unitary Party).
- QGL* *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A man lives not only his personal life as an individual, but also, consciously or unconsciously, the life of his epoch and his contemporaries.

Thomas Mann
The Magic Mountain (1924)

Who am I?
I am a socialist...

A young socialist, a new and dangerous kind, who has studied, suffered, meditated and understood something of the past and recent Italian history.

Carlo Rosselli
Socialismo liberale (1930)

In 1975, the debate in Italy concerning the nature of the intellectual and armed resistance against fascism flared anew. The opening salvo was fired by Giorgio Amendola, a leading figure of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and an important protagonist in the antifascist struggle. From the pages of the PCI newspaper *L'Unità*, Amendola called for a new and comparative history of Italian antifascism that went beyond the traditional hagiographical and mythical

treatments that were so common after the war.¹ In calling for a more rigorous historiography of antifascism, Amendola cited the work of the PCI as a model:

The communists have begun to write their history, to open their archives and indicate their errors. And the others? Only the communists made mistakes? One only has to put forth some criticism of the behavior of the socialist party or Giustizia e Libertà to raise a chorus of indignant reactions...²

Amendola's contention that only the communists had engaged in a critical historiography of their past was immediately challenged by an equally respected member of the antifascist struggle and former member of Giustizia e Libertà, the historian Leo Valiani. In an interview that appeared two weeks after Amendola's criticism, Valiani admitted that Giustizia e Libertà had been mistaken on some points but asserted that the movement had neither ignored nor hidden its past errors. In fact, the history of Giustizia e Libertà had been written many times and with critical detachment.³

In response to Valiani, Amendola elaborated on his earlier statements with the assertion that Italian antifascism was ill-prepared for the tasks set before it in

¹Giorgio Amendola, "Per una storia dell'antifascismo," *L'Unità*, 20 July 1975, p. 1. On the "myth" of the Resistance, see Romolo Gobbi, *Il mito della Resistenza*, Milan: Rizzoli, 1992. For the historiographical problems of antifascism and the Resistance, see Alberto Aquarone, *Fascismo e antifascismo nella storiografia italiana*, Rome: Edizione della Voce, 1986; Mario Bendiscioli, *Antifascismo e resistenza: impostazioni storiografiche*, Rome: Editrice Studium, 1964; Franco Cambi, *Antifascismo e pedagogia, 1930-1945*, Florence: Vallecchi, 1980; Charles F. Delzell, "The Italian Anti-Fascist Resistance in Retrospective: Three Decades of Historiography," in *Journal of Modern History* 47, March 1975, pp. 66-96; Marino Berengo, "Italian Historical Scholarship since the Fascist Era," in *Daedalus*, Spring 1971, pp. 469-484; Emiliana Noether, "Italy Reviews Her Fascist Past," in *American Historical Review* 61, July 1956, pp. 877-899; Claudio Pavone, *Una guerra civile: saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza*, Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1991.

²Amendola, "Per una storia dell'antifascismo," p. 1.

³Leo Valiani, "Ma quanti erano gli antifascisti?," interview with Valerio Riva in *L'Espresso*, n. 31, 3 August 1975, p. 30.

1943-45 in the wake of fascism and that the causes for its failure were to be found in the early development of antifascism which left a legacy of political, organizational and cultural immaturity. For Amendola, the socialists and members of Giustizia e Libertà ("giellisti" as they were called from the first two letters GL) were most responsible for this state of affairs.⁴

The debate grew in intensity when Valiani defended Giustizia e Libertà from the accusations of ideological and political confusion; in a direct swipe at Amendola, he claimed that Rosselli and Giustizia e Libertà were working for a "democratic, libertarian, even socialist revolution, but not for a new dictatorship."⁵

Amendola neglected to mention that he and Rosselli had already passed over this terrain as early as 1931 in two important essays.⁶ At that time, when some Italian communists were still advocating a Leninist "dictatorship of the proletariat," which would soon degenerate into the Stalinist nightmare, Rosselli's reply was evidence of "socialfascism" for the PCd'I. Valiani pointed out that the evolution of the communist states of eastern Europe and the democratic evolution of the PCI proved Rosselli to be right, since he had advocated a "liberal

⁴Giorgio Amendola, "E noi antifascisti non sbagliamo mai?," *L'Espresso*, n. 35, 31 August 1975, p. 30. See also his *Intervista sull'antifascismo*, Bari: Laterza, 1976, pp. 168-69.

⁵Leo Valiani, "No caro Amendola, Rosselli vide giusto," *L'Espresso*, n. 36, 7 September 1975, p. 23.

⁶Giorgio Amendola, "Con il proletariato o contro il proletariato?," *Lo Stato Operaio* V, n. 6, June 1931, pp. 309-18; Rosselli's response was "Risposta a Giorgio Amendola," in *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 1, January 1932, pp. 33-40.

socialism," and as he wrote several times, even a "liberal communism."⁷

As the debate raged on, the future president of the Italian Republic, Sandro Pertini, a former colleague of Rosselli's, entered the fray, as did the republican leader Ugo La Malfa.⁸ In truth, the Amendola-Valiani exchange resurrected a debate that was almost a half-century old concerning the theoretical and ideological differences between the PCd'I and the heterogeneous amalgam of independent leftist thinkers that eventually gathered around Carlo Rosselli and his movement of *Giustizia e Libertà*. Ironically, in an interview published a year later, Amendola conceded that "a true analysis of fascism in the non-communist antifascist emigration began in 1929 with the arrival of Rosselli [in Paris] and the formation of *Giustizia e Libertà*."⁹

When *Giustizia e Libertà* was created in the autumn of 1929 in Paris, the orthodox communist interpretation was that any class other than the proletariat was by nature a force of reaction. Palmiro Togliatti, one of the principal founders of the PCd'I and later its general secretary, had written the official party condemnation of the *Giustizia e Libertà* as early as 1931.¹⁰

Even the more moderate figures of the Left were often critical of Rosselli.

⁷Valiani, "No caro Amendola, Rosselli vide giusto," p. 24.

⁸Sandro Pertini, "Amendola, a che punto sei arrivato?," *L'Espresso*, n. 37, 14 September 1975; Ugo La Malfa, "Quando cacciamo via il re," *L'Espresso*, n. 36, 7 September 1975.

⁹"The communists then responded and a confrontation began, naturally polemical, between communists and GL...Rosselli answered me, criticizing and rejecting my positions, but in a very serious manner." Giorgio Amendola, *Intervista sull'antifascismo*, p. 69.

¹⁰"Ercoli" (Palmiro Togliatti), "Sul movimento *Giustizia e Libertà*," in *Lo Stato Operaio* V, n. 9, September 1931, pp. 463-73.

His disagreements with the older generation of socialists leaders such as Filippo Turati, Claudio Treves and Giuseppe Emmanuele Modigliani will be treated later. Giuseppe Saragat, leader of the democratic socialists, wrote a critical review of Rosselli's ideas in 1931; yet by 1944 he had come to very different conclusions, as had many of his contemporaries.¹¹

During the immediate post-war period Rosselli's thought was largely ignored in Italy. Although a former colleague, Ferruccio Parri, became the first prime minister of post-war Italy, he was soon out-manuevered by the more adept Christian Democrats. With the dissolution in 1946 of the Partito d'Azione, which had inherited the political and intellectual legacy of Giustizia e Libertà, Rosselli was relegated to the pantheon of the martyrs of fascism and his thought was conveniently neglected in the context of the cold war, except for a few independent intellectuals of the Left such as Norberto Bobbio.¹² The single attempt at a scholarly assessment came from Aldo Garosci, another member of Giustizia e Libertà, who wrote the first biography of Rosselli while in exile in the

¹¹Giuseppe Saragat, "Rosselli e il *Socialisme libéral*," in *Avanti!*, 10 January 1931. For his positive assessment of Rosselli, see his *Filippo Turati e Carlo Rosselli*, Rome: PSI, 1944.

¹²Norberto Bobbio has been for many years professor of political theory at the University of Turin and a member of the Italian Parliament. Among his many works that have kept alive the tradition of a "liberal socialism," see *Liberalism and Democracy*, trans. Martin Ryle and Kate Soper, London: Verso, 1990; *Democracy and Dictatorship: The Nature and Limits of State Power*, trans. Peter Kennealy, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989; *Which Socialism? Marxism, Socialism and Democracy*, trans. Roger Griffin, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987; and especially his Introduction to the reprint of Carlo Rosselli's *Socialismo liberale*, ed. John Rosselli, Turin: Einaudi, 1979.

United States during the Second World War.¹³ It was not until 1968 that another full-length scholarly work appeared on Rosselli. Nicola Tranfaglia of the University of Turin completed the first volume of a projected two-volume biography utilizing many of the documents not available to Garosci in his American exile.¹⁴

In Florence, the Istituto Storico della Resistenza in Toscana (hereafter cited as ISRT) was created to store the documents and facilitate research on the antifascist resistance. The Rosselli family donated essential papers to the ISRT to create the Archivio di Giustizia e Libertà (hereafter cited as AGL).¹⁵ The remaining papers of Carlo Rosselli were donated to the Biblioteca Nazionale Firenze (BNF) by John Rosselli, eldest son of Carlo and his wife Marion Cave Rosselli. My research in Florence was furthered by two other institutions, the Circolo di Cultural Politica "Fratelli Rosselli" and the Istituto Socialista di Studi Storici.

In Rome, the Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS) holds papers collected by the fascist police concerning Rosselli. In Milan, the Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione in Italia (INSMLI) was an important resource.

¹³Aldo Garosci, *La vita di Carlo Rosselli*, 2 vols. Milan, Florence, Rome: Edizioni U, nd. (but 1945); reprinted as *Vita di Carlo Rosselli*, 2 vols. Florence: Vallecchi, 1973.

¹⁴N. Tranfaglia, *Carlo Rosselli dall'interventismo a Giustizia e Libertà*, Bari: Laterza, 1968.

¹⁵The contents of the AGL have been catalogued in *Archivi di Giustizia e Libertà*, ed. Costanzo Casucci, Rome: Ministero dell'Intero, Pubblicazioni degli Archivi di Stato, LXVIII, 1969.

Tranfaglia's book generated renewed interest in Rosselli. In 1977, the ISRT, with the support of the regional government of Tuscany and the commune of Florence, sponsored an international conference on the Rosselli brothers, commemorating the fortieth anniversary of their assassination; the proceedings were then published the following year.¹⁶ The correspondence between the Rosselli brothers and their mother was published in 1979.¹⁷

Meanwhile, historical and political developments within Italy itself had created the context for a new look at Rosselli and *Giustizia e Libertà*. During the 1970s, the PCI loosened its ties with Moscow and set course for "Eurocommunism." Both the PSI and the PCI began to reformulate their positions regarding the complex relationship between liberty and socialism along lines that Rosselli had already sketched in the 1930s. Recent works on democratic theory¹⁸ recall Rosselli's conception of a "liberal socialism"--an heretical position in the 1930s.

Within Italy, Garosci continued to write on Rosselli and *Giustizia e Libertà*, while the historian Gaetano Salvemini labored in exile until his return to

¹⁶*Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia: Attualità dei fratelli Rosselli a quaranta anni dal loro sacrificio*. ed. Carlo Francovich. Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1978. (Hereafter cited as *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*).

¹⁷*Epistolario familiare: Carlo, Nello Rosselli e la madre (1914-1937)*. ed. Zeffiro Ciuffoletti with an introduction by Leo Valiani. Milan: SugarCo, 1979. (hereafter cited as *Epistolario familiare*).

¹⁸See Frank Cunningham, *Democratic Theory and Socialism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987; John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971; Michael Walzer, *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Basic Books, 1988; Ralf Dahrendorf, *Fragmente eines neuen Liberalismus*, Stuttgart: Deutsches Verlag-Anstalt, 1987.

Florence in 1949. Rosselli's originality and modernity began to attract more attention. Costanzo Casucci, former director of the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome edited two volumes of Rosselli's exile writings¹⁹. Although Tranfaglia never completed the second volume of his biography on Rosselli, his work after 1968 has been indispensable.²⁰

Why was it only in the 1970s that Rosselli and *Giustizia e Libertà* were again studied seriously? The publication history of Rosselli's writings is a complicated affair.²¹ His major theoretical work, and the only one of book length, *Socialismo liberale*, was published in Paris (in French) in 1930.²² After the liberation of Italy, another edition was published in Italian under the supervision of Leone Bortone and Aldo Garosci.²³ This edition however, was based on the French translation since Rosselli's papers were then in the possession of the family, still in exile. The next edition of the work only appeared in 1973, as the first volume of *Opere Scelte di Carlo Rosselli (Socialismo liberale)*.²⁴ This

¹⁹*Scritti dell'esilio*, 2 vols. vol. I, "Giustizia e Libertà e la Concentrazione Antifascista" (1929-1934); vol. II, "Dallo scioglimento della Concentrazione Antifascista alla guerra di Spagna" (1934-1937), ed. Costanzo Casucci. Turin: Einaudi, 1988, 1992.

²⁰Nicola Tranfaglia, "Carlo Rosselli dal processo di Savona alla fondazione di Giustizia e Libertà," *Movimento di Liberazione in Italia* XXIV, n. 6, January-March 1972, pp. 3-37; and "Carlo Rosselli e l'antifascismo," in *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, pp. 181-204; both are reprinted in his *Labirinto italiano*. Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1989, pp. 147-211.

²¹For the bibliography of Rosselli's writings (1917-1937), see Appendix A.

²²Carlo Rosselli, *Socialisme libéral*. trans. Stefan Priacel. Paris: Libraire Valois, 1930.

²³*Socialismo liberale*. Milan, Florence, Rome: Edizione U, 1945.

²⁴*Opere Scelte di Carlo Rosselli*, 2 vols. ed. John Rosselli. Turin: Einaudi, 1973, 1988/1992. The second "volume" here consists of the two volumes of *Scritti dell'esilio*.

edition was based on the papers deposited by the Rosselli family in the Biblioteca Nazionale Firenze (Fondo Rosselli).²⁵ That same year, the Garosci biography was reprinted. In 1979, Einaudi reissued *Socialismo liberale* with Bobbio's introduction and an anthology of Rosselli's political writings was later published in 1988.²⁶

Rosselli's essays concerning the Spanish Civil War were published in 1938, a year after his death and reprinted in 1967.²⁷ A volume of his political and autobiographical essays appeared even before the Second World War was over.²⁸ Although the Rosselli family had contracted to publish his work as early as the 1950s, the first volume did not appear until 1973. Some have suggested that the highly politicized world of Italian publishing decided to refrain from publishing his work. In the post-war settlement Italian society was divided as the Christian Democrats acquired and maintained domination over the political sphere while the Communists were able to conquer the cultural arena. Italian historiography, intimately tied to the great mass political parties of the post-war period, was not a hospitable terrain for the political thought of the heretical

²⁵The BNF was kind enough to allow me access to these papers, catalogued--appropriately enough--under "Rare Manuscripts." See Aldo Garosci, "Manoscritti di Carlo Rosselli," in *Il Ponte* IV, n. 2, February 1949, pp. 530-32 and Gaetano Salvemini, *Il Ponte* IV, n. 7, July 1949, p. 905.

²⁶Carlo Rosselli, *Scritti Politici*. ed. Zeffiro Ciuffoletti and Paolo Bagnoli. Naples: Guida Editore, 1988.

²⁷*Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*. preface by Gaetano Salvemini. Paris: Edizioni di Giustizia e Libertà, 1938; *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, introduction by Aldo Garosci. Turin: Einaudi, 1967.

²⁸Carlo Rosselli, *Scritti politici e autobiografici*. preface by Gaetano Salvemini. Naples: Polis Editrice, 1944.

Rosselli. Instead, he was safely enshrined in the antifascist martyrology and conveniently forgotten by most political theorists.

Outside of Italy, Rosselli's work has attracted the attention of scholars like Jan Petersen of Germany, Emilia Modena-Burkhardt of Switzerland, Pierre Guillen of France, Ekaterina Naumova of Russia and Charles Delzell and Joel Blatt of the United States.²⁹ The first English translation of *Socialismo liberale* appeared in 1994.³⁰

This work is, on the simplest level, an introduction to Rosselli for an English audience. Beyond that, it seeks to situate Rosselli and *Giustizia e Libertà* in the wider context of Italian antifascism.³¹ Rosselli was a more sophisticated theorist than has been acknowledged even though the constraints of his activism

²⁹Jan Petersen, "Giustizia e Libertà e la Germania," in *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, pp. 217-238 and "Gli antifascisti italiani in Germania e il volo di Bassanesi," *Movimento di Liberazione in Italia*, n. 93, 1968, pp. 37-48; Emilia Modena-Burkhardt, *Von Giustizia e Libertà zum Partito d'Azione*. Zurich: Limmat-Verlag, 1974; Pierre Guillen, "La risonanza in Francia dell'azione di Giustizia e Libertà e dell'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," in *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, pp. 239-260; Charles F. Delzell, "The Assassination of Carlo and Nello Rosselli: Closing a Chapter of Italian Anti-Fascism," *Italian Quarterly* XXVIII, n. 107, Winter 1987, pp. 47-64; Joel Blatt, "Carlo Rosselli's Socialism: the Giellisti and the Socialists," paper presented at the international conference, "One Hundred Years of Italian Democratic Socialism: 1892-1992", Kennedy Library, Boston, 19 March 1993; "Lo studio di Rosselli negli Stati Uniti," paper presented at the conference "Carlo Rosselli e il socialismo liberale," Florence, 13-14 January 1994; Ekaterina Naumova, "Lo studio di Rosselli in Russia," paper presented at the same conference.

³⁰Carlo Rosselli, *Liberal Socialism*. ed. Nadia Urbinati, trans. William McCuaig. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. For reviews on the work, see Richard Bellamy, "Political Philosophy and Methodology: *Liberal Socialism* by Carlo Rosselli," in *Political Studies* 43, n. 2, June 1995, pp. 405-06; and Michael Walzer, "The Road Not Taken: *Liberal Socialism* by Carlo Rosselli," in *The New Republic*, vol. 211, nn. 8-9, 22 August 1994, pp. 38-40.

³¹While the literature on fascism in English is vast, the works on antifascism are not as plentiful. The classic study is Charles F. Delzell's *Mussolini's Enemies: The Italian Anti-Fascist Resistance*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961 (reprint, New York: Howard Fertig, 1974); see also Frank Rosengarten, *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press, 1919-1945*, Cleveland, Ohio: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1968.

hindered him from elaborating a unified system. But even if Rosselli had had the time and opportunity, whether willingly or enforced (as in the case of Gramsci), I do not believe that he would have created a unified, closed and abstract system of thought. Such a system contradicted his belief that political and social realities were in a constant state of flux. In short, his deeply felt humanism and historicism were better expressed in the essay form, which he mastered.

This work is an inter-disciplinary, multi-faceted recreation of a world view that some fear to be lost. Central to the study is an attempt to explain the sources and assess the impact of Rosselli's work. This is done through a close reading of his various textual productions--journalistic, historical, theoretical and literary. An understanding of Rosselli and the *Giustizia e Libertà* movement is critical for a fuller comprehension of Italian antifascism and illuminates some of the darker shadows in the labyrinth of twentieth-century Italian history. I have tried to be aware of my own ideological and cultural assumptions and hope that the worst defects of an uncritical reconstruction have been avoided. This work makes no claim to scientific objectivity; such a claim must be viewed with suspicion especially when the reader is in the realm of biography. My hope is that an inherent subjectivity and admiration for the subject has been tempered by a critical consciousness. If it is true that every work of writing is in some sense autobiographical, then the writing of biography must be even more so.

In reconstructing Rosselli's life and thought, I have been guided by the concepts of heresy, exile and tragedy. In Rosselli we can see the contradictory,

conflicted, paradoxical and ironic position of the twentieth century intellectual. He was a thinker who was always conscious of his own marginalized position and "in-between-ness," refusing to occupy the traditional space of the intellectual and resisting the temptation to forge another, competing hegemonic ideology. Instead, his thought is ideology "in a minor key," always painfully aware of its own shortcomings. Marginalized, exiled, and ultimately assassinated by the fascist regime, Rosselli is a pivotal figure in the socialist and antifascist tradition. In him we might recognize our better natures. Perhaps this work will capture some faint echo of that heretical voice banished into exile.

CHAPTER II

YOUNGER BROTHERS

You'll try to reveal what should remain hidden, you'll try to incite people to learn from the past and rebel, but they will refuse to listen to you...

Elie Wiesel
A Beggar in Jerusalem (1970)

There is a new system of life to put into place. At first we will have bitter disillusion; but we must succeed. If not, one must arrive at the sad conclusion that love among the Italians arises only during war. And that would be a sad and painful paradox.

Carlo Rosselli
"New Tasks" (1919)

Carlo Rosselli was born in Rome on 16 November 1899. His father Giuseppe Rosselli was a musicologist and his mother, Amelia Pincherle Rosselli, was a noted author. Both the Rosselli and Pincherle families had been actively involved in the *Risorgimento*, the movement for national unification in nineteenth-century Italy. Leone Pincherle, an uncle of Amelia's, was a minister of the

Venetian Republic under Daniele Manin.¹ The Rosselli family was originally from Livorno, a major port city on the western coast of Italy and participated in the commercial, political and cultural life of that city. They were secular Jews and members of the upper bourgeoisie.

In 1841, while some members of the Rosselli family were residing in London, they met the exiled Giuseppe Mazzini. Their stay in England made them convinced Anglophiles (Giuseppe Rosselli was called "Joe" at home), and the encounter with Mazzini brought them into the struggle for Italian independence. In the Rosselli house, the family kept, almost as a sacred relic, a note from Mazzini to Sabatino Rosselli, asking the latter to purchase "fifty sacks of the usual merchandise;" i.e. arms and weapons for the unification movement. Mazzini was to pass the last days of his life with the family of Pellegrino Rosselli in Pisa, dying in their home on 10 March 1872 under the assumed name Joseph Brown. Pellegrino Rosselli even recorded the hour of his passing--1:35 p.m.²

The Rosselli family was related to the Nathans, another prominent Jewish family. Ernesto Nathan, mayor of Rome (1903-1907) and Grand Mason, had previously been editor of Mazzini's newspaper in Rome, *Il Popolo*. As secular Jews, the Rosselli, Pincherle and Nathan families saw their emancipation as directly tied to the *Risorgimento*, liberating Italy from both the rule of the

¹Aldo Garosci, *Vita di Carlo Rosselli*, 2 vols. Florence: Vallecchi, 1973; vol. I, p. 13. (Hereafter cited as Garosci, *Vita*.) Also Alessandro Levi, *Ricordi dei fratelli Rosselli*. Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1947, p. 6.

²Garosci, *Vita* I, p. 12.

Austrians and the Papal authorities. Accordingly, they supported the constitutional monarchy as it was formed in 1861. If there was any religion in the Rosselli home, it was Mazzini's ethical conception of *I Doveri dell'Uomo*--"The Duties of Man." Full assimilation of the Italian Jews proceeded apace after unification and they contributed to the political, intellectual, and commercial life of the new nation. Two Italian Jews, Luzzatti and Sonnino, became prime ministers, and Jews were promoted and decorated in all ranks of the military; in stark contrast to countries like Germany or the France of Dreyfus.³

Giuseppe "Joe" Rosselli and Amelia Pincherle were married on 3 April 1892 and moved to Vienna, center of music and art,⁴ where Giuseppe continued his studies and career as a musicologist. In July of 1895, Aldo, their first son was born in the Austrian capital; with bitter irony he would be killed by the Austrians at the front in World War I. Amelia was writing plays and in 1898 her play *Anima* was staged in Turin, garnering national acclaim and winning a literary

³One of the most decorated officers in the Italian Army was General Emanuele Pugliese. There is an extensive bibliography on the Jews of Italy. See especially Renzo De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*. Milan: Mondadori, 1977; Attilio Milano, *Storia degli ebrei in Italia*, Turin: Einaudi, 1963; Sergio Della Pergola, *Anatomia dell'ebraismo italiano*. Rome: Carucci, 1976; Gina Fornigini, *Stella d'Italia, stella di Davide: gli ebrei dal Risorgimento alla Resistenza*, Milan: Mursia, 1970. In English, Sergio Della Pergola, "The Demography of Italian Jews," Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1972; Meir Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews: German-Italian Relations and the Jewish Question in Italy, 1922-1945*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978; H. Stuart Hughes, *Prisoners of Hope: The Silver Age of the Italian Jews, 1924-1974*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983; Susan Zuccotti, *The Italians and the Holocaust: Persecution, Rescue and Survival*, New York: Basic Books, 1987; Alexander Stille, *Benevolence and Betrayal: Five Italian Jewish Families Under Fascism*, New York: Summit Books, 1991.

⁴On the cultural ferment and vitality of Vienna at the time, see Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, New York: Knopf, 1980.

prize.⁵

The small family returned to Rome where Carlo was born in November of 1899; a year later, the third son and last child, Nello, was born in Florence. In 1901, Giuseppe and Amelia separated, but remained on amicable terms until Giuseppe's premature death a decade later. A temporary but serious financial setback in 1903 forced Amelia and the three sons to move to more modest quarters in Florence. The separation and Giuseppe's early death meant that Amelia was charged with the upbringing of her three young sons. By all accounts she was an extremely intelligent, strong-willed and independent woman who became the dominant force in their moral and intellectual development. Years later, writing from prison, meditating on the turn his life had taken and the relationship with his mother, Carlo wrote to her:

In real life, like the fictional one of subjects in a novel or the theater, there is always an inevitable separation between the creator and the creation. And the more worthy, noble and pure the labor of the creator, the more so will be the autonomous capacity of the creation for life and original development. The great artist is distinguished precisely by the rare privilege of being able to provide for the creation its own initiative and unmistakable life which allows it to evolve on paths other than those marked for it.⁶

An illuminating episode concerned the eldest son Aldo. Noticing that he had a natural tendency toward social vanity and overweening pride, Amelia sent him to work as an apprentice in the shop of a local Florentine carpenter. The incident became the basis for her story "Topinino garzone di bottega" of 1909 in which

⁵Corrado Tumiati, "Amelia Rosselli scrittrice," *Il Ponte* XII, n. 4, April 1956, pp. 576-586; Garosci, *Vita* I, p. 14.

⁶Letter of 25 March 1928; reprinted in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 412-14.

a wealthy young boy embarks on a humble odyssey discovering the privations, sacrifices and dignity of another life.⁷ The moral of the story, that wealth and social privilege impose responsibilities and ethical imperatives, was not lost on the three brothers. Family letters--revealing a continuous dialogue concerning politics, culture and society--demonstrate that Carlo developed a strong social conscience at an early age.⁸

Amelia's writings were to be reflected in the character, thought and actions of her three sons. A recurring motif of her work was what was called at the time "the social question:" the conflict between different social classes trapped in the defense of their respective interests. In her 1903 collection of novellas, *Gente oscura* (Obscure People), the protagonists were the working and non-working poor who were portrayed in such a manner as to receive a sympathetic review in the Socialist daily *Avanti!*; the reviewer declared that such a depiction of the laboring classes had to have been written by a socialist.⁹ However, although Amelia was close to several members of the Italian Socialist Party, she, like most members of the upper-bourgeoisie, supported the conservative-liberal parliamentary state under the House of Savoy. Yet her writings would create an active interest in social problems and a sense of duty, obligation and responsibility in all three

⁷Tumiati, p. 585; Garosci, *Vita* I, p. 18.

⁸Besides the letters collected in *Epistolario familiare*, others are in the Archivio Giustizia e Libertà (AGL) in the Istituto Storico della Resistenza in Toscana (ISRT), Florence. See also Riccardo Bauer, "I Rosselli e l'epistolario familiare," in *Risorgimento* XXXII, n. 1, February 1980, pp. 1-11.

⁹Tranfaglia, p. 17.

brothers. The ideal which she passed on to them was the imperative of moral freedom; an heroic modern sensibility reminiscent of Ibsen, whom she admired; the emancipation of men and women from the hypocritical dictates of convention, and an absolute submission to the dictates of conscience--of the free will striving for, but never actually achieving, perfection.¹⁰

Amelia Rosselli was active in the cultural life of Florence and familiar with contemporary political debates.¹¹ She was among the founders of the Lyceum of Florence and counted some of the most important politicians of Italy among her acquaintances. At the Rosselli house on via Giusti in Florence, the family paper was not *La Nazione* of that city (which supported neutrality in 1914), but *Il Corriere Della Sera* of Milan which advocated intervention in the war on the side of France and Britain.¹² The editor of *Il Corriere*, Luigi Albertini, vociferously criticized the policies of Giovanni Giolitti, several times prime minister and the dominant power broker from November 1903 until March 1914. It was in this liberal, nationalist, interventionist milieu that Carlo first became interested in politics.

Carlo was an active and vivacious child, with a lively temperament, naturally generous and extroverted. At the age of twelve he underwent an

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹¹On the cultural life of Florence just before World War I, see Walter Adamson, *Avant-garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993. For insights into the antifascist current in Florence, see Carlo Francovich, "Proposte sull'antifascismo: Firenze," in *Italia Contemporanea* XI, n. 32, 1980, pp. 15-18.

¹²Tranfaglia, p. 17.

operation for appendicitis; the resulting forced bed rest created a weight problem for the already robust youngster, in addition to a life-long struggle with phlebitis. The necessary sedentary recovery period did not sit well with the active child and it soon became apparent to his mother that his lively character could not be tamed by a classical education. Unlike Antonio Gramsci or Piero Gobetti, both precocious children, learning did not come easily for Rosselli. He found Latin and the humanities to be especially difficult and was proficient only in mathematics. His mother, aware of his nature, made the courageous decision to withdraw him from the classical *ginnasio* and enroll him in a local technical school.¹³ This was no small decision, considering that the *ginnasio* traditionally led to the university and eventually a proper bourgeois career and that the technical schools implied a certain social and intellectual inferiority. More importantly, Rosselli did not receive the classical, literary, humanist education which formed his contemporaries in the antifascist struggle, but was trained in a more pragmatic, concrete and practical tradition. This orientation would inform his later thinking and make him wary of elaborate, sophisticated "systems" of thought and theoretical abstractions. Carlo acquired "culture" only through an intense immersion in the classical humanist tradition after the war; he felt his position as a leader of antifascism required it.

Carlo and Nello were often inseparable, but they were a study in contrasts. Carlo was vivacious, passionate in his convictions, anxious to transform thought

¹³Garosci, *Vita* I, p. 19.

into action, eager to argue for hours, willing and able to command others. Nello was more the scholar, quiet, passionate about his historical studies,¹⁴ highly intelligent, well liked by everyone who met him--unlike Carlo who sometimes provoked highly emotional reactions--both positive and negative--in the people he met. The two would often argue about questions of the day, with Carlo building in enthusiasm to a final conclusion, yet insisting on continuing the discussion until Nello would cry out in exasperation: "Enough, I can't take it any more! You've filled my head up."¹⁵ The historian Gaetano Salvemini recalled that

Always devoted to each other, the two brothers shared the same doubts and difficulties and tried to solve them together. But although brought up in the same environment by the same mother and in the same schools, they were widely different in temperament. Carlo's overflowing vitality needed to express itself in unceasing activity. Nello was of a gentle, serene, contemplative disposition. Carlo's instinct was to pass immediately from thought to action, subject to revision if he found himself mistaken. Nello stopped to consider all sides of a question before deciding to act, but once his mind was made up, he never wavered. The two brothers complemented each other and this explains their constant harmony and affection.¹⁶

¹⁴Nello Rosselli, *Mazzini e Bakunin. Dodici anni di movimento operaio in Italia (1860-1872)* Turin: Einaudi, 1927; *Carlo Pisacane nel Risorgimento italiano*, Genoa: Orfini, 1936; *Saggi sul Risorgimento e altri scritti*, preface by Gaetano Salvemini with an introduction by Alessandro Galante Garone. Turin: Einaudi, 1946; *Nello Rosselli, uno storico sotto il fascismo: Lettere e scritti vari (1927-1937)*, ed. Zeffiro Ciuffoletti. Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1979.

¹⁵Levi, *Ricordi dei fratelli Rosselli*, p. 59.

¹⁶Gaetano Salvemini, *Carlo and Nello Rosselli: A Memoir*, London: For Intellectual Liberty, 1937, p. 8.

War

When the first World War broke out in the summer of 1914,¹⁷ Carlo was not quite fifteen years old, yet from the correspondence with his mother we get the impression of a young man already familiar with international politics. Amelia's letters to him during that summer warn that Italy's alliance with the Central Powers would create serious problems for those advocating neutrality: "... the situation is becoming more complicated every day and who knows if Italy can hold out with its neutrality...if the Germans should win, they will make us pay dearly for our neutrality...I greatly fear that if it goes poorly for Germany, they will send us an ultimatum to help."¹⁸

Florence in 1914 was witnessing a new type of nationalism created by Enrico Corradini. Corradini had been editor of the political review *Il Regno* (1903-1906) and had forged an ideology of reactionary and radical nationalism which aimed to incorporate the emerging proletariat, thus defusing its revolutionary potential. His political career was a direct result of Italy's 1896 defeat at Adowa which eventually led to the creation of the Italian Nationalist Association in December 1910. He and the Nationalists led the campaign for the Libyan war of 1911-12 and pressed for the merger of the Italian Nationalist Association with the fascists in 1923. His particular strain of nationalism featured state sovereignty, strong executive leadership, national will, social cohesion,

¹⁷For a study of the conditions in Italy on the eve of war, see Richard Bosworth, *Italy and the Approach of the First World War*, London: Macmillan, 1983.

¹⁸*Epistolario familiare*, letters of 6 and 9 August 1914, pp. 29-31.

enlistment of the working class, the disciplinary function of the hierarchy, reconciliation between Church and State, irredentism, militarism, the corporate state and colonial empire¹⁹--a program that was taken over in its entirety by Mussolini. Corradini had also been co-founder and director of *Germinal*, an art periodical and director of *Marzocco*, a literary review, clearly illustrating the nexus between art, literature and the politics of nationalism. For his "contribution" of the idea of "proletarian nationalism," upon his death in 1931 Corradini was buried in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence--besides Galileo, Machiavelli, Michelangelo and Rossini.

The Rosselli family were nationalists, but of a different type, what one scholar has called, in a different context, a "cosmopolitan culture-oriented nationalism."²⁰ They were also convinced interventionists. In her 1921 work *Fratelli minori* (Younger Brothers), Amelia Rosselli painted an image of the family on that night in May 1915 when Italy entered the war:

...that night! In the middle of sleep, the sleep of a May night, I awoke suddenly because of the crash of a door opening with great force. It was an unforgettable sight... The older brother was in the void of the gaping door, hair in the wind, face lit up, almost hidden beneath the cloth of the tricolor...opening of the window, fresh and sweet air bursting in, the pealing of the bells.

Up, up, get up! Help me put the flag outside!

¹⁹"Corradini, Enrico" in *The Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, ed. Philip V. Cannistraro. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982, pp. 140-141. See also Franco Leoni, *Origine del nazionalismo italiano*, Naples: Morano, 1970; Pier L. Occhini, *Enrico Corradini e la nuova coscienza nazionale*, Florence: Vallecchi, 1925; Ronald S. Cunsolo, "Enrico Corradini e la teoria del nazionalismo proletariato," *Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento* 65, July-September 1978, pp. 341-55.

²⁰Georg G. Iggers. *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1983; esp. pp. 29-43.

Don, don, dondon, don...down from the bed like a madman, behind that sign, behind that call: don, don, don...

Quickly! Quickly! Up! How it weighs! How it weighs!

Her heart strained. Behind them, on the threshold, straight, rigid, the mother watched with a fixed stare that saw nothing. They threw themselves upon her, yelling with happiness.

The mother wept...²¹

It was undoubtedly a scene that was being played out all over Italy that night, but the juxtaposition of an intimate family scene with the political and our knowledge of Aldo's fate on the Austrian front lends the scene a tragic poignancy.

When Carlo returned from his summer vacation in 1914 at the beach resort at Viareggio, his mother, who had been vacationing in the mountains for her health, noted a marked change in her son: he was "another person," taking up his studies with a vengeance and returning to his beloved piano.

Meanwhile, Aldo had refused the privilege (as a medical student and the eldest son of a widow) of being assigned to the Red Cross. Volunteering for the infantry, he became a military officer after training at Verona, and soon rose to the rank of lieutenant. Since his sector was relatively quiet, he requested a transfer to the front, only to be killed on 27 March 1916. Recommended by his commanding officer for the Gold Medal of Honor, he was posthumously granted the Silver Medal.²² The death of her eldest (and by some accounts her favorite) son left an indelible impression on Amelia Rosselli. *Fratelli minori* was both a memorial to Aldo as well as a moral challenge to Carlo and Nello to live up to

²¹Amelia Rosselli, *Fratelli minori*, Florence: Bemporad, 1921; quoted in Tumiatì, pp. 585-86.

²²Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 22, note 1; Tranfaglia, p. 14.

her idealized vision of the martyred son.

The publication of *Fratelli minori* was symbolic of the intersection of the private, the public and the political that was to characterize the Rosselli family. It was immediately recognized as a thinly-veiled autobiographical work about the "older brother" Aldo who had died in the war and the "fratelli minori" or younger brothers (Carlo, Nello and their colleagues) who returned from the front or had not fought at all. There was, perhaps, a note of reproach in the work that did not escape the younger brothers.

For Amelia Rosselli, the nation's youth were divided into two camps:

There is the nationalist current--closed, ardent, aggressive, full of love and hate, ferocious in the defence of the rights of the nation, jealous of its greatness...it does not discuss and instead of words prefers deeds; it is constantly on the defensive and declares that those who do not follow are enemies. It isolates the nation from the world, as if it were an absolute value...And there is another current that resembles the end of a river where the waters overflow sluggishly and uncertain, and spill beyond the confines of the surrounding land, and all is mixed up, and in the confusion the landscape loses any character, and one doesn't know where the river ends and the sea begins.²³

The world that her younger sons inherited was changing, perhaps beyond her comprehension. That world was "sick with intellectualism--the illness of earliest youth. With the difference that in the past, the young men were ill with a mostly literary intellectualism; these of today, flung into life before their time, are ill with a political illness which is very dangerous."²⁴

Carlo Rosselli was a "democratic interventionist"--believing that the war

²³*Fratelli minori*, pp. 47-49.

²⁴Quoted in Levi, *Ricordi dei fratelli Rosselli*, p. 17.

was a moral, ethical and political struggle between the reactionary forces of Austria and Germany against the liberal, democratic traditions of France and England. Before being called up in the draft, he volunteered at the local Office of War Information which contacted families with information about husbands, brothers and sons at the front and prepared packages for soldiers and prisoners of war. He joined an international organization of young democrats founded by Julien Luchaire, professor at the French Institute in Florence, and father of Jean Luchaire, later a notorious collaborator in Vichy France. Among this group, Rosselli met and befriended Leo Ferrero, son of the historian Guglielmo Ferrero and secretary of the Italian section of the organization.²⁵

Rosselli's first published articles were for the journal of this international organization, *Noi Giovani*, which appeared in January 1917. The lead editorial of the premier issue, which was a sort of manifesto, was written by both Carlo and Nello:

We feel the responsibility which weighs upon us: we feel the mission which awaits us. And for this we have to prepare ourselves quickly and with all our strength. It is necessary that we have a strong and sure will, a true conception of Good and Evil. It will be enough to propose an Ideal, noble and lofty, pure and generous and direct our efforts toward that. An ideal of justice and happiness for all men...²⁶

The language, the sentiment, the rhetorical tropes were neither uncommon nor unfamiliar. The dominant theme of the journal was the war as a struggle between democracy and reaction, civilization and barbarism. This form of nationalism was

²⁵Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 22.

²⁶Quoted in Tranfaglia, p. 18.

radically different from Corradini's.

Rosselli's editorial "Libera Russia" (Free Russia) appeared in the fourth issue of *Noi Giovani*. Dated 24 March 1917, the essay commemorated the first Russian Revolution of 1917 as being the material facet of a moral revolution begun by the great Russian writers Gorky, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky. Russia, on the periphery of Europe both geographically and culturally, was entering the modern age:

...We had a false idea of Russia...we have finally begun to feel the influence of a people that spoke a language of blood that we, free and independent, could not understand...It is as if we have awakened from a dream and have still not grasped the profound value of that which has taken place. It is so beautiful, so marvelous, so enormous that we cannot yet believe it.²⁷

At the same time, Rosselli's enthusiasm was tempered by pragmatism; he realized that society could not be transformed overnight and warned against forcing history into an ideological straight-jacket:

Yes, these reforms are beautiful and lofty; noble and marvelous. But implement them slowly, little by little...From absolute, oppressive theocracy, the Russian people have passed to the purest liberty. The jolt must undoubtedly be profound: the roots of an evil are not exterminated by a single blow, but with more blows. Whether Russia deals with the shakeup well, we won't know now, but within months...²⁸

Several months later, Lenin's victory delivered the final verdict on the February/March Revolution and the Kerensky government.

Rosselli's second article, in the spring of 1917, as he was preparing for military duty, was in homage to Woodrow Wilson after the president's April

²⁷"Libera Russia" in *Noi Giovani*, n. 4, April 1917, quoted in Tranfaglia, p. 19.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 20.

speech announcing American entrance into the war. Rosselli's interventionist position is clearly evident in his praise of Wilson:

Wilson is more than a man. He is the true aspect, the great, immense aspect of the war. He has asked the people to unite amongst themselves, for a common ideal. And for this ideal which could not be reached with peace, he has sacrificed his people and has gambled his popularity...²⁹

Six years after the end of the war, in a letter from Milan, Rosselli wrote "I think history will give a better judgement of him than that formed by his contemporaries."³⁰

Participating in the war left an indelible mark on Rosselli, as it did on countless others of the "war generation."³¹ But whereas for many this experience and the resulting demoralizing return to civilian life led to an attraction to fascism, for Rosselli the war worked to crystallize certain vague ideas regarding the social problems of modern Italy. In his own words, it was the war experience that, at least in part, liberated him from "the isolation of class" and made him feel the necessity for political and social renewal. In an article published for the Youth Federation of the PSU (Socialist Unitary Party) in May of 1924, he wrote:

...Here I want to refer to only one factor, *the war*...I want only to detail the human upheaval that it effected not only in things, but in souls, in consciences. The ruins that it has sown in its wake are more than the sacrifice of the dead and the suffering of the living, but in the profound and painful influence that it has had on the souls of all men, young and old, combatants and non-combatants. For a generation at least, its memory will live in the actions of

²⁹"Wilson" in *Noi Giovani*, n. 5, April 1917; quoted in Tranfaglia, p. 20.

³⁰Letter of 18 February 1924; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 214.

³¹John Thayer, *Italy and the Great War*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964.

men...³²

In June of 1917, Carlo was called to arms and four months later was enrolled in a course for military officials at Caserta. At Caserta, he was under the tutelage of Luigi Russo, professor of "military morality." Russo was the author of the recently published *Vita e morale militare* which was infused with the idealist philosophy and pedagogy of Giovanni Gentile and, as it happens, was also the military instructor of Palmiro Togliatti, future leader of the PCd'I.³³

Influenced by Russo, the young Rosselli was attracted to several ideas in particular: the first stressed a consciousness of duty; the second was the insistence on the importance of free will in human affairs; another was Russo's idea that officers should not be dominated by a sense of hierarchy in their relations with their men; that they should, as far as possible, develop an effective democracy in military life.³⁴

Rosselli passed the winter of 1917-18 in the mountains of northeastern Italy. It was the winter after the disastrous defeat at Caporetto and a moment of crisis for the entire war effort. Yet it was also the moment in which the nation awoke to the danger of an Austrian invasion and one of the few times in modern Italian history that political differences were (temporarily) put aside for the greater good. Years later he wrote of a strange experience at the front: with the coming

³²"Inchiesta sui giovani (Guerra e fascismo)" in *Libertà!*, 10 May 1924.

³³Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 23; Tranfaglia, p. 23.

³⁴Tranfaglia, pp. 21-22.

of spring the ice began to melt so quickly in the trenches that the soldiers were soon up to their waists in mud, frantically trying to dig themselves out. Since nature is not partial, the Austrians found themselves in the same predicament; consequently, without a formal declaration, both sides refrained from firing as they attempted to remake their trenches during an unofficial ceasefire.³⁵

War for Rosselli was "a great school of life," an incubator of ideas, a revealer of false idols; "I left a boy and returned a man," he wrote years later.³⁶ As an officer in the crack mountain troops of the Alpini, Rosselli came into contact for the first time with the mass of soldiers who were mostly peasants. In a particularly revealing passage he wrote:

Even in the most enthusiastic soldier, the most frenetic interventionist, a new equilibrium was formed by the realistic contact with our people. By contact with the people, many came to know and value the "masses," these masses which today so many people scorn. We came to know their pain, their remarkable *virtu'*. I myself remember with emotion the discovery I made and the great love I felt for them. The contact with death, with the pain of war, far from the false literature of the various patriotic writers, close to the small and eternal tragedies, the young students who left full of inebriated folly and outside of any reality, became tempered and entered into a new elevated harmony. They left with an abstract ideal, and to make it real, to adhere to life and reality which is always complicated, they were able to understand many things that certainly would have escaped them in their isolation of class and profession.³⁷

A great and bitter irony of the war was that it was fought by many as the last battle of the *Risorgimento* to bring about the final unification, this time in

³⁵The story is recounted in Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 24.

³⁶Letter of 16 November 1928; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 427.

³⁷"Inchiesta sui giovani (Guerra e fascismo)" in *Libertà!*, 10 May 1924; quoted in Tranfaglia, p. 23.

spirit, of the new nation. Instead, the war revealed and exacerbated the social tensions created with unification and fostered an atmosphere that led to the formation and appeal of fascism. The government, by making promises during the course of the war that it knew it would not and could not honor, brought upon itself the wrath of the returning soldiers. Wilson's post-war orchestration of the peace made the secret clauses of the Treaty of London mute. All of which conspired in the creation of the myth of the "mutilated victory."³⁸

By the end of the war, Rosselli began to feel the handicap of his sparse education. He lamented his placement in a technical school instead of the more traditional *liceo* which would have allowed him entry to university. As his first biographer Garosci wrote: "This is something which fundamentally distinguishes Rosselli from the other leaders of humanistic movements, who came to politics through the intermediary of culture, all colored by the 'philosophy of history.'" Carlo acquired culture later and with difficulty, to be equal to his rising reputation, and the new duties he felt called to."³⁹ In a November 1919 letter to his uncle Gabriele Pincherle, Carlo complained that he would not be happy until he deepened his studies; a few days later he again wrote to his uncle:

You inquire as to what I read. Here I have an avalanche of books!...I have read a political history of Italy in three volumes by Oriani; I skimmed through parts since Oriani conceives the function of the historian in completely personal terms...I liked the last volume best because it focuses specifically on Italian

³⁸For an examination of the post-war conditions in Italy, see *La transizione dall'economia di guerra all'economia di pace in Italia e Germania dopo la prima guerra mondiale*. Peter Hertner and Giorgio Mori, eds. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1983.

³⁹Garosci, *Vita* I, p. 20.

politics up to 1887.⁴⁰

In addition to political history, Rosselli was reading the works of Dostoyevsky, Carlyle and French drama. During the last months of the war, he was increasingly interested in social and political problems and studied the works of the historian Pasquale Villari.⁴¹ In a letter after his discharge he wrote, "I have read *The Blind Musician* of Korolenko: beautiful, but not as good as I expected; I am now reading Sandro Levi's book on the political philosophy of Mazzini."⁴²

This concern with social and political problems can be seen in his article that appeared in the youth journal *Vita* on 20 May 1919 which was printed in Florence under the influence of Gaetano Salvemini's *L'Unità* and with the collaboration of Piero Gobetti and Leo Ferrero. Rosselli's article "Compito nuovo" (New Task), is evidence of a new vitality among Italy's youth, tempered by the experience of the war which was "destroyer and creator, dissolver and evolver, brake and catalyst for every passion, hate and love together." The war, Rosselli wrote, had the power of stripping man of all his lying vestments; his soul then appears in all its fierce dignity or its cowardice. From his own childhood experience came the

⁴⁰Alfredo Oriani, *La lotta politica in Italia: origini della lotta attuale (476-1887)*, 5 vols. Florence: Libreria della Voce, 1917-1921; quoted in Tranfaglia, pp. 25-26.

⁴¹Pasquale Villari (1827-1917) from Naples was professor of History at the University of Pisa. He is best known for his biographies on Machiavelli and the friar Girolamo Savonarola and his *The First Two Centuries of Florentine History*, trans. Linda Villari, New York: AMS Press, 1975. See "Villari, Pasquale" in the *Encyclopedia of Historiography*, ed. D.R. Woolf, New York: Garland, forthcoming.

⁴²Vladimir G. Korolenko, *The Blind Musician*, trans. Aline Delano, Boston: Little, Brown, 1890; Alessandro Levi, *La filosofia politica di Giuseppe Mazzini*, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1922. Letter in the AGL, quoted in Tranfaglia, p. 39, note 52.

following proposal:

...it is necessary to abolish all the private elementary schools, because it is not proper that because of the stupid fear of retrograde parents, the child of the wealthy does not know the child of the poor, and therefore grows up in the most perfect ignorance of the life of the people, nourished only by unjust and evil prejudice.

He closed the essay in a style that would be characteristic of his tolerance later in dealing with political disagreements on the Left:

...we want to know and be known. To be able to say to the youth of the people: you are a socialist, fine; we respect your opinion. And if this one tells you: I am against the bourgeoisie--O.K. then let's talk about it...not to fight against socialism, nor for a cretinous fear of bolshevism that will never come. And if it does come, it will not frighten us; we are young enough and strong enough to work hard. There is before us a new system of life to put into place. At first we will have bitter disillusion; but we must succeed. If not, one must arrive at the sad conclusion that love among the Italians arises only during war. And this would be a sad and painful paradox.⁴³

In December 1918, the Italian government announced that all male citizens who had participated in the war would be granted suffrage and Rosselli was therefore able to vote in the national elections of 1919. From Asiago, where he was completing his tour of duty, he followed the electoral campaign with great interest, voting for the democratic-republican veteran Meoni who was defeated by the celebrated playwright Sem Benelli. Benelli was popular for his support of D'Annunzio's Fiume expedition and went on to support Mussolini in 1922 only to renounce fascism in 1924. In Rosselli's Florence, the local section of the war veteran's association was bitterly divided between a majority of democrats and a minority of rabid nationalists. In the November 1919 elections, the veterans voted

⁴³"Compito nuovo" in *Vita* (VII), 20 May 1919; now in *Opere scelte di Carlo Rosselli*, vol. I. ed. John Rosselli. Turin: Einaudi, 1973. pp. 5-8.

for the democratic candidates; but by 1921, the Nationalists and fascists were able to capture the allegiance of the group. In a prophetic letter, Rosselli noted "All of Italy is in turmoil. There is a restlessness; certainly these five years of parliamentary life will have great importance that might mean the end of the maximalist wing of the socialist party."⁴⁴ The young veteran was not only critical of the maximalist wing of the PSI, but also of Giolitti's tactics of *trasformismo*,⁴⁵ believing that the war generation and its experience would pave the way for a rebirth and moral regeneration of political, social and cultural life in Italy. In some ways he was right; but the war also gave birth to fascism.

For many Italians, politics was synonymous with "affairs of State" and consequently not a vital concern. The war changed this perception of politics in all social classes. Between 1915 when Italy entered the war and 1920, social revolution was brewing in the country. The Russian Revolutions of 1917, the occupation of the factories by the workers' councils in Turin, D'Annunzio's expedition to Fiume and the rise of fascism all contributed to a new obsession with politics.

The war pushed Rosselli into a vague, humanitarian socialism. He and his brother Nello wrote several novellas, all with the same theme: a young idealistic

⁴⁴Quoted in Tranfaglia, p. 31.

⁴⁵*Trasformismo* (literally transformism") was the political tactic mastered by Prime Minister Giolitti (1903-05; 1906-09; 1911-14; 1920-21) of transforming real or potential political enemies into collaborators by the use of alliances and unsavory tactics.

youth gives up all his worldly possessions and devotes his life to the *popolo*;⁴⁶ in essence--a modern day St. Francis of Assisi. One day after the war they approached their mother and proposed the following: "What would you think if we abandoned our house and our inheritance? If we asked you to come live with us, a poor life based only on what we earned?" Amelia Rosselli, realizing that her sons were in earnest, felt that their sincerity merited a respectful reply. She responded that there was nothing intrinsically wrong with their proposal, but that she could not see any use in it. Would it not be better to use their wealth and position to achieve their noble goals? The two brothers looked at each other and said: "We thought you would answer like that. We were sure that you would not ridicule or deride our ideas." Yet from that moment on, Amelia recalled, she felt distanced from her two surviving sons, separated by another world that she could not participate in nor understand.⁴⁷

After his return from military duty, Carlo began to frequent socialist circles in Florence after Alessandro Levi introduced him to Filippo Turati, leader of the PSI and Claudio Treves. Rosselli was attracted to the good humor, paternalism and human sympathy of Turati and admired Treves for his role as lieutenant and chief polemicist for the PSI.

In the fall of 1919, Rosselli enrolled in the Istituto di Studi Scienze Sociali "Cesare Alfieri" in Florence, quickly receiving his *liceo* diploma. Years later, he

⁴⁶Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 27. Unfortunately, these novellas have been lost.

⁴⁷The episode is recounted in Garosci, *Vita I*, pp. 27-28.

recounted a telling incident involving the future fascist Italo Balbo that took place at the school:

One must return to 1920. The Quadrumvir of the Revolution [Italo Balbo], today in disgrace [1936] had to take an exam in international law...he didn't have a clue, but as a good *squadrista* he didn't forget that force always prevails over law, above all in that nebulous jurisdiction that is international law. He took the exam with a frail and timid professor. At the end of the exam, confronted with total disaster, Italo Balbo crashed a big fist on the table, making the professor turn pale with fright:

"Either you pass me or it will end badly."

"I can't, you don't know anything. You have no right to be promoted."

"Either you pass me or it will end badly."

The professor left the hall in haste, but Balbo was right behind him in a "punitive expedition." A tram saved the professor. But Balbo passed the exam in international law.⁴⁸

In early 1924 when Balbo was a rising star in the fascist firmament, Rosselli had written of "...the Balbo scandal; my ex-companion at the Istituto di Scienze Sociali who has risen so high with so few intellectual qualities and with no moral qualities at all."⁴⁹

By the time Carlo was discharged and returned to his studies, he was already beginning to question the ideas, assumptions and presuppositions of democratic interventionism. His reading of the French pacifist writers Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland forced him to reconsider the war and to forge a deeper understanding of the motives of democratic interventionism and the neutralism of the PSI. In a letter of December 1920, the veteran Rosselli is a very different person from the interventionist of 1915:

⁴⁸"L'esame di Ginevra," *Giustizia e Libertà*, 9 August 1935.

⁴⁹Letter of 27 February 1924, now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 216.

...I especially like Barbusse's *Le Feu*: it is so true, so simple that often I see my soldiers before me...I begin to understand how the publication of the book was allowed; it is so true that probably no censor had the courage to deny its publication; or perhaps no censor understood it. There are no high-sounding phrases against the war, nor impetuous oratories. Barbusse does not speak "au dessus de la mêlée," but instead speaks softly...Inexorably, but not imposed, comes the question: why the war or why this war?⁵⁰

Rosselli continued his studies and in 1921 completed his work with a thesis for a degree in social science entitled "Il sindacalismo rivoluzionario," which he defended in June 1921. The thesis was prepared under the guidance of the economist Riccardo Dalla Volta and reflects Rosselli's concern with the political, social and economic events taking place in Italy and Europe after the war. In August and September of 1920, the factories of Turin were occupied by workers under the influence of Gramsci's *Ordine Nuovo* movement, while the relationship between the Confederazione Generale di Lavoro (CGL) and the PSI was reaching crisis levels concerning the role and function of the workers' union in the modern state. The thesis also shows Rosselli's familiarity with the economic and political theories currently evolving in England, Germany and France. There are many references to Sorel's work which had been introduced into Italy by Croce; Rosselli cites not only the *Réflexions sur la violence*, but also *L'avenir socialiste des syndicats*, and *Matériaux d'une théorie du prolétariat*. Rosselli's ideas on English socialism were derived, in part, from Sidney and Beatrice Webb's *Industrial Democracy* which he called "a magnificent study." The Italian tradition

⁵⁰Letter of 6 December 1920; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 126-27. The phrase "au dessus de la mêlée" is from Romain Rolland.

was represented by Arturo Labriola's *Economia, socialismo e sindacalismo* and his *Riforme e rivoluzione sociale*, as well as Ivanoe Bonomi's *Le vie nuove del socialismo*.⁵¹

The work is a study of modern trade unionism in its various manifestations in different countries. It begins with an historical review of workers' associations beginning in ancient Rome and sketching various types of unions from the revolutionary brand to the reformist and even Christian workers' unions.

What, though, is trade unionism? Rosselli offered various answers. He cited Bernstein: trade unionism is "organized free-trade;" he quoted Arturo Labriola: trade unionism is a "free-trade of class;" and mentioned the Belgian economist Griffuelhes: "le mouvement de la classe ouvrières qui veut parvenir à la pleine possession de ses droits sur l'usine et sur l'atelier." For Rosselli, trade unionism is "the theory that aims, by means of the union of producers, for the social revolution which installs a federalist and socialist regime, in which the unions themselves must constitute the fundamental nuclei." Trade unionism, "whether of the revolutionary or reformist variety, is a movement for the elevation of the proletariat; like revolutionary and reformist socialism, the importance of the movement is precisely in the activity of the movement itself; the ends are almost secondary." Socialism is, in an historical and theoretical

⁵¹Georges Sorel, *Réflexions sur la violence*, Paris: Pages Libre, 1908; *L'avenir socialistes des syndicats*, Paris: G. Jacques, 1901; *Mathériaux d'une théorie du prolétariat*, Paris: P.M. Riviere & Co., 1919; Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, London: Longman, 1920; Arturo Labriola, *Riforme e rivoluzione sociale*, Milan: Società editoriale milanese, 1904; Ivanoe Bonomi, *Le vie nuove del socialismo*, Rome: Sestante, 1944.

sense, the "father, the origin" of modern trade unionism.⁵²

Yet, revolutionary trade unionism rebels against the father. Rosselli argued that the socialist movement suffered from its transformation into a political party in which the various members were held together only by the glue of ideology and not common interests. In addition, the intellectuals and ideologists of the party denigrated and sought to dominate the trade unions. Lenin's scornful analysis only hardened their position into dogma.

According to Rosselli, the true basis of revolutionary syndicalism rests on 1) class struggle; 2) the union of producers; 3) a critique of the State; and 4) federalism. From these precepts flow the anti-militarism, anti-patriotism, anti-intellectualism, anti-parliamentarianism of revolutionary syndicalism, along with its condemnation of democracy and its conception of violence.⁵³

Rosselli's conception of class struggle was idiosyncratic, reflecting his own struggle to reconcile his social class with his political beliefs: "We accept the fact of class struggle as historically inevitable, but for the love of simplicity we do not confuse non-manual workers with the exploiting class."⁵⁴ While crediting Sorel with being the chief theorist of the revolutionary syndicalists, Rosselli charges the French thinker and his followers with falling into the trap of supporting a theory

⁵²"Il sindacalismo rivoluzionario," thesis of June 1921 at the Istituto di Scienze Sociali "Cesare Alfieri"; deposited in the AGL. Now in *Opere Scelte di Carlo Rosselli*, vol. I, p. 10.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 12.

even in the face of a contradictory reality.⁵⁵ In a passage which was to foreshadow his heretical stance as a socialist, he declared:

It is useless to weary oneself in denying the religious character of socialism...It is useless to affirm that the essential character of socialism is economic...The true socialist is a religious man; socialism is faith. Moreover, it is undeniable that socialism in its present development cannot constitute a complete system; it concerns itself with earthly life, it scorns the metaphysics of the soul, it is not sufficient to satisfy a spiritual thirst. And if socialism is a limited and incomplete system, syndicalism understood as a purely economic movement is even more so.⁵⁶

Rosselli was advocating a closer relationship between the ideal of socialism and the practical work of the trade unions. His models were the working class parties of England and Belgium, in which the trade unions, in their daily, practical and pragmatic activity, shaped the theory of the political party and not vice-versa. In his early writings, he even went so far as to view this system as a panacea for modern society, but after a trip to England in 1924, he would realize the limitations of this concept.⁵⁷ In a modern capitalist society, workers' unions could achieve certain limited goals; but for a radical transformation of social and political relations, the unions were inadequate. In essence, this was not very different from Lenin's position.

In the 1921 thesis, one can find many of the themes and ideas that were to occupy Rosselli later in the antifascist struggle. There is, for example, a concern with the tension between centralized power and regional autonomy and

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 12-17.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 18.

⁵⁷Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 38.

the influence of Pareto and Mosca in forging a theory of "elites" that echoed Saint-Simon's vision of a technocratic society:

We find in the history of humanity this evolution of the ruling elite: from those that are the strongest and the bravest, we have passed to the richest...and now supremacy is slowly turning in favor of the most intelligent...⁵⁸

In his thesis, Rosselli insisted on making the distinction between *liberalismo* (liberalism) and *liberismo* (laissez-faire or free-market economics), and attacked the classic economic theorists and their modern counterparts:

Ah! This famous "freedom to work"! How many crimes have been committed in its name! But what does it really mean for its defenders? Not "the free development of each person," nor freedom for all, but freedom for a minority (capitalists) to oppress a majority...we ask ourselves: what was the significance of that famous concept "freedom to work" sanctioned by the revolution of 1789? To us it seems to have a purely negative value...⁵⁹

In the concept of war as a force of moral and spiritual renewal, Rosselli recognized an affinity between revolutionary syndicalism and nationalism (he could have added Futurism as well).⁶⁰ He criticized syndicalism and socialism for the same reason:

This is the profound error of the doctrine and practice of both revolutionary syndicalism and socialism: they abstract themselves from the masses, from the very masses that they seek to save and redeem, and end in practice with the inevitable dictatorship of the minority.⁶¹

Although he supported reformist socialism and syndicalism, Rosselli recognized

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 118.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 27.

⁶⁰Carlo Rosselli, *Opere Scelte* I, pp. 16-17.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 20.

that different countries, with different historical experiences, could make use of revolutionary methods:

We firmly believe in the victory of socialism through the reformist method, and consequently reformist syndicalism. But we do not deny the value of the revolutionary method; it might be necessary in certain historical periods as a means to reach an end; for example: we believe that Russia could do nothing else but accomplish revolution through violence. Painful, but necessary and inevitable given the conditions of the old regime, there was truly no way out and no other hope. But in other countries, for example Italy, the conditions are without doubt profoundly different.⁶²

Rosselli acknowledged that the revolutionary brands of socialism and syndicalism were more attractive; they had an "élan vital," a "mystique," that inspired faith, hope and action in the future. The reformist method, concerned with more mundane matters, seemed pallid and bland in comparison. Yet the latter has a greater chance of success in societies with strong civil and political institutions. In his thesis Rosselli emphatically stated an idea which would inform all his subsequent work, both political and theoretical: "It is in the forge of reality, in daily practice, that the power of a theory is measured."⁶³

The thesis was approved with highest honors by the faculty of the Istituto di Scienze Sociali, and Dalla Volta, dean of the school, offered Rosselli a position as his assistant. Carlo, recognizing the antiquated methods of the school, declined.⁶⁴ (Dalla Volta, an Italian Jew, perished in Auschwitz.) It was after completing the thesis, in his attempt to re-cast it in book form, that Rosselli

⁶²Ibid., p. 17.

⁶³Ibid., p. 21.

⁶⁴Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 39.

sought out the advice of Gaetano Salvemini, who at the time was teaching at the University of Florence and advising Nello Rosselli. Salvemini was undoubtedly correct when he criticized the thesis as "a volcanic eruption, a statement of faith" rather than a work of historical or critical scholarship. The Florentine historian described the thesis as:

the work of a reformist syndicalist who foresaw and desired a renewal *ab imis* of the workers' organization imbued with the socialist ideal. At the time he was under the influence of Alessandro Levi, Rodolfo Mondolfo, *Critica Sociale* and Turati. But the liberal-democratic roots remained intact in his spirit.⁶⁵

For Salvemini, well-known and sometimes criticized for his *concretismo*, what was needed were more facts and less "professions of faith." The valid and true historical reconstructions that Rosselli depicted, according to Salvemini, were then marred by "personal affirmations, declarations of faith and prophecies."⁶⁶ Salvemini returned the manuscript to Rosselli covered with corrections and criticisms on every page and the work remained unpublished. But the historian did see a fundamental idea embodied in the work: "the search for a socialism that incorporated liberalism and did not repudiate it, nor would it adopt an indifferent or equivocal position."⁶⁷ This, as we shall see, was part of Rosselli's life-long struggle: to remind socialists of their liberal heritage.

From Sorel, Rosselli stressed the necessity of the moral education of the working classes and agreed with Bonomi (who was echoing Bernstein) that

⁶⁵Cited in Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 39.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

"socialism might come about, and yet it might not." At the same time, Rosselli was careful to criticize Sorel's fascination with violence, the myth of the general strike, the denigration of democracy and the corresponding insistence on an audacious minority to lead the masses. What Rosselli took from Sorel was the stress on "voluntarism" against the crude determinism that had shaped Marxism in Italy for several decades.⁶⁸

For Rosselli, reformist socialism and syndicalism should focus their attention on the daily, pragmatic and practical problems of the workers: the organization of the factory; contracts for land-tenure; the role and function of the artisan in an age of increasing industrialization. For this reason, he singled out the English tradition as a model: "Guild socialism is still little known in Italy, but it probably contains the solution of the future ordering of society. After the recent experience in Russia and other countries, the concept of a collectivist socialism, which makes the State the great centralizing power with an immense bureaucracy, will be superseded." The workers' movement, the syndicalist tradition and the workers' cooperatives that were evolving were, for Rosselli, fulfilling a positive, creative, liberal and liberating function.⁶⁹

Although Rosselli had decided during the war on a serious return to his studies, he was also actively involved with the political and cultural life of post-

⁶⁸Tranfaglia, pp. 58-59; see also Paolo Bagnoli, "L'esperienza liberale di Carlo Rosselli, 1919-1924," *Italia Contemporanea* XXVIII, October-December 1976, pp. 29-42.

⁶⁹Carlo Rosselli, "Il sindacalismo rivoluzionario," p. 272; see also Maurizio Degli Innocenti, "Carlo Rosselli e il movimento sindacale: Dalla tesi di laurea a *Socialismo liberale*," in *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, p. 56.

war Italy. The "war generation" had been politicized by the European conflict, and many saw the opportunity, indeed the necessity, for a renewal of European society.

In January 1921, Carlo Rosselli participated in the XVII National Congress of the PSI at Livorno. His letter of 18 January to his mother Amelia conveys his excitement at being invited to the Congress, and foretells the coming split within the party which would lead to the birth of the PCd'I.⁷⁰

Notwithstanding his familiarity with the leaders of the political parties, Rosselli was more attracted to the formations and organizations outside the sphere of party politics. Most of these groups were forming around political-literary journals like *Il Caffè* of Milan, in the tradition of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment journal of that name, founded by the Verri brothers. Another important center was Turin, which could boast of having both the precocious Piero Gobetti with his journals *Energie Nuove* and *La Rivoluzione liberale*, along with Antonio Gramsci's *Ordine Nuovo*. What these various enterprises had in common was the attempt to forge an alliance of intellectuals to fight fascism on the ethical-cultural plane. The model--whether to follow or reject--was Croce.⁷¹

⁷⁰"This morning it seems that the schism will occur on the left [of the party]," letter of 18 January 1921; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 131.

⁷¹The literature on Croce is vast. In English, see Edmund Jacobitti, *Revolutionary Humanism and Historicism in Italy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981; David D. Roberts, *Benedetto Croce and the Uses of Historicism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987; M.E. Moss, *Benedetto Croce Reconsidered*, Hanover: University Press of New England, 1987; A. Robert Caponigri, *History and Liberty: The Historical Writings of Benedetto Croce*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955.

Although cited as a new phenomenon in Italian history,⁷² these organizations can trace their lineage back to the cells that formed during the *Risorgimento* period in the nineteenth century. This attraction to the people and ideas outside the traditional structure of the political parties is central to an understanding of Rosselli's ideas and actions later in the antifascist cause.

His association with the leaders of the PSI led to other publications. In September 1921 Alessandro Levi asked Rosselli to write a review of a recent work by the young lawyer Eugenio Artom, *Lineamenti della crisi sociale* (Elements of the Social Crisis). Carlo was immediately taken by the challenge of writing a review: "I believe that reviewing a book is a very useful exercise; it forces one to criticize and synthesize."⁷³ The review appeared in Turati's *Critica Sociale* in December 1921, and gave rise to a rich correspondence between the author and reviewer that acted as a catalyst for Rosselli's examination of the role of the trade unions in modern society.

Artom emphasized the increasing power of the modern nation-state and denied any class struggle; yet paradoxically, he was more attracted to Gramsci's *Ordine Nuovo* group than the fascists, Nationalists or reform socialists; the last were accused by Artom of being responsible for the present civil strife in Italy.

In his review, Rosselli questioned whether the State was actually increasing in power, citing the many organizations that had been developing in civil society,

⁷²Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 37.

⁷³Letter of 16 September 1921; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 134.

especially workers' organizations, in the last century. While it may be true that the State was increasing its tasks from the formal and juridical point of view, various class organizations worked to disperse the power of the State. Citing Sorel that "the workers' organic associations are the present cells of the future society" and that the trade union "is a true and small State," Rosselli challenged Artom's solution of absorbing the trade unions into the formal apparatus of the State. "To bring the trade union, with its present structure, into the orbit of the State would mean to suffocate its development, to prevent the possibility of being what it is destined to become: the framework and foundation of the future social system."⁷⁴

The epistolary exchange between Rosselli and Artom touched on some highly controversial issues such as the contrast between the two equally powerful myths of individualism and collectivism; another was the common sentiment felt by the Italian socialists as voiced by Claudio Treves: "the past has fallen, the future is not realizable, the present is empty; and each one of us seeks to fill that void."⁷⁵

The most profound difference between the two was broached in Artom's letter of 15 March 1922:

You [Rosselli] deny the antithesis between solidarity and individualism, between collectivism and liberalism. I agree with you in recognizing that socialism descends from individualism in a logical development...But you say that socialism is the heir to liberalism.

Artom goes on to say that although both may have descended from the principles

⁷⁴Quoted in Tranfaglia, pp. 94-95.

⁷⁵Claudio Treves quoted in Tranfaglia, p. 102.

of 1789, today [1922] socialism and liberalism are clearly antithetical:

...for me this antithesis, which you wish to deny, is ever more clear and certain...You seem to me above all a pragmatist, in every case you consider everything under the aspect of action...excuse my frankness, but you seem to be more concerned with the absolute **goodness** of actions that are inspired by those ideas rather than their absolute **truth**.⁷⁶

As can be discerned from the tone of Artom's letter, pragmatism was a philosophy held in low regard in the Italy of the 1920s. Yet Rosselli, who accepted the label, was also an idealist in the Mazzinian tradition. More precisely, one can say that he was an idealist in his ideas and a pragmatist in his actions.

After the successful defense of his first thesis Rosselli continued his studies, now in jurisprudence at the University of Siena, completing another degree there in 1923. Before deciding on Siena and law though, he spent time in Milan and Turin, hoping to find a professor of economics who would accept him as a student. Armed with letters of introduction from Gaetano Salvemini, Gaetano Mosca, Alessandro Levi and Guglielmo Ferrero, he sought out Pasquale Jannaccone and Luigi Einaudi in Turin.⁷⁷ Unsuccessful in finding a mentor, Carlo spent some of his time in Milan at the La Scala Opera House, attending Pizzetti's *Debora e Jaele* (and commenting on the revolutionary character of the opera)⁷⁸ and Verdi's *Falstaff*, "divinely conducted by Toscanini." More importantly, he

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 102-103.

⁷⁷Pasquale Jannaccone and Luigi Einaudi were the two leading exponents of free trade economics in Italy and taught at the University of Turin.

⁷⁸Ildebrando Pizzetti, *Debora e Jaele: dramma in tre atti*, Milan, New York: G. Ricordi, 1924.

met with Claudio Treves ("he received me most graciously") and the brilliant young journalist from Turin, Piero Gobetti ("...contrary to expectations, he seems congenial..."). In a bitter letter, he railed against the politicians in Parliament who refused to act in the face of increasing fascist violence in the country:

I am furious with the democrats who have finally dropped their mask, demonstrating that beneath rosy veils and postulates proclaimed and defended for twenty years as sacred patrimony (parliament, universal suffrage, etc.) they hid, in a majority of cases, nothing other than purely egotistical interest.⁷⁹

Meanwhile he continued his search for a mentor in political economy. "Yesterday I attended a lecture by [Achille] Loria," he wrote in late 1922, "he seemed very nice, but in the classroom I would not hesitate to call him pitiful. The students poke fun at him in every possible way. The exams are a real farce." His impression of Jannaccone was no better: "...he was polite, yes, but it seems to me that he does not concern himself more than is necessary; indeed, he is a very cold man and of few words."⁸⁰ In early 1923, seeing little of Loria or Jannaccone, Rosselli spent his time in Turin frequenting the circles of Piero Gobetti, the Ferrero family, Piero Sraffa and Carlo Levi while occasionally attending the lectures of Mosca and the economist Einaudi. He was drawn into examining the political situation as it was evolving in 1923 with the Pact of Union when the Italian Nationalist Association formerly merged with the National Fascist Party (PNF); in February he wrote: "...the Right has triumphed. From the negative phase it passes to the positive with the absorption of three hundred

⁷⁹Letter of 17 December 1921; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 134-35.

⁸⁰Letters of 10 and 12 December 1922; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 150-51.

thousand nationalists..." Days later he wrote asking his mother: "Have you heard of the arrest of Serrati? The chain becomes larger; the inevitable course of things continues..." And on March 5: "...Fascism is turning decisively to the right, especially with the nationalist infusion...I am happy because all this will open the eyes of many people that deluded themselves on the content and motives of Fascism."⁸¹

In July 1923, after receiving his law degree, Rosselli travelled to Genoa to meet with Attilio Cabiati, professor of economics at the Institute of Political Economy at Bocconi University in Milan. Cabiati, favorably impressed with Rosselli, hired him as his assistant for the 1923-24 academic year. It was Cabiati who shaped Rosselli's ideas regarding free trade which gave rise to a long-running debate with the economist Luigi Einaudi in 1923-24. In fact, by publishing his critique of free trade, Rosselli was challenging Loria, Einaudi and the other "big guns" of economic liberalism. In a series of four articles published from February 1923 to May 1924, as well as his thesis for the law degree, Rosselli insisted, contrary to common assumptions, that there was no strict connection between the economic policies of free trade and the freedoms defended by political liberalism.⁸² "Free competition is the central pillar of the liberal system; the

⁸¹Letters of 23 and 28 February 1923 and 5 March 1923; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 165-170. Giacinto Menotti Serrati was an important socialist leader opposed to World War I. He was arrested by the fascists to prevent a united front between the PSI and the PCd'I. In September 1923, he was expelled from the PSI and joined the PCd'I the following year.

⁸²Carlo Rosselli, "La lotta di classe nel movimento operaio," in *Critica Sociale* (XXXIII), 1-15 February 1923, pp. 444-446; "Per la storia della logica," *La Rivoluzione liberale* (II), 15 March 1923, pp. 27-28; "Contraddizioni liberiste," in *La Rivoluzione liberale* (II), 24 April 1923, p. 48; and "Luigi Einaudi e il movimento operaio," in *Critica Sociale* (XXXIV), 15-31 May 1924, pp.

fundamental dogma of the school is 'the free play of economic forces'," Rosselli wrote in his first article for Gobetti's journal, *Rivoluzione liberale*.⁸³ Hence the liberal argument against workers' associations. As long as the capitalist system exists, there is only one possible hope for the workers: class struggle between workers (grouped in united unions that transcend national borders) and the capitalists.

Ignored by most of the liberal economists, argued Rosselli, were two essential facts: the workers are both producers and consumers; and that the reality of the marketplace and the existence of monopolies did not square with their theories of free trade. If it was true that a new oligarchy was arising that controlled the economic life of the world and the politics of Europe and America, then the only response for the workers was to organize, because their organization would be larger and more unified, since they are also consumers. "By a play of forces that appears dialectical, it can be stated that the best defense of the consumers can be reached only through their coalition as producers, that is to say, the positive side of human activity."⁸⁴

During 1922-23, as fascism was coming to power, Rosselli became active in the Circolo di Cultura which had been established in the winter of 1920-21 by

158-59. The last three have been reprinted in *Opere Scelte di Carlo Rosselli*, vol. I. *Socialismo liberale*, pp. 29-51.

⁸³"Per la storia della logica," in *La Rivoluzione liberale*, 15 March 1923; now in *Opere Scelte* I, p. 30.

⁸⁴"La lotta di classe nel movimento operaio," in *Critica sociale*, (XXXII), 1-15 February 1923; now in *Opere scelte*, vol. I, p. 45.

students at the University of Florence. Carlo worked with Piero Calamandrei, Piero Jahier and others in creating a forum for discussion and debate on social and cultural issues. Their intention was to create "an apolitical Circolo di Cultura, open to all the free currents of modern thought."⁸⁵ First meeting in the private homes of various members, including the Rosselli house on via Giusti, the Circolo moved to permanent quarters in February 1923 in Piazza Santa Trinità and gained legal status as a formal association.⁸⁶ In an attempt to attract members and funds, a committee was formed which included Rosselli, Ernesto Rossi and Calamandrei to write a manifesto which was printed and distributed throughout Florence:

Many people have lamented the lack in our city of a center of study that, without abandoning any aspect of intellectual activity, is oriented in a special manner toward sociological analysis, in the larger sense of the word...the lack of economic and social culture of the so-called educated class, which too often believes it can form ideas concerning complex contemporary phenomena based on biased and fragmentary journalistic information, is universally acknowledged.⁸⁷

Carlo, in keeping with his character, threw himself into the activities of the Circolo with great energy. His colleague in the effort, Calamandrei, recalled in 1945: "I remember Carlo's almost infinite joy when we received the locale for the Circolo; he bought the furniture, the bookshelves, the books, the foreign journals."⁸⁸ In that expansive vitality of his, he was able to bring a spiritual

⁸⁵Quoted in Tranfaglia, p. 120.

⁸⁶Piero Calamandrei, "Il manganello, la cultura e la giustizia," in *Non Mollare 1925*, Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1955, p. 73.

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 73-74.

⁸⁸For the library of journals and newspapers in the Circolo di Cultura see Appendix B.

significance even to these small practical matters."⁸⁹

Although the Circolo di Cultura began as "an apolitical association," it was soon drawn into the vortex of Florentine politics. Calamandrei, for one, has shown how the Circolo became more political after fascism came to power. For many of its members, resistance against fascism was first and foremost a moral impulse: it was an insurrection of human reason against the return of bestiality. For many, it embodied "the last expression of democratic life in Florence."⁹⁰

The members of the Circolo thought of it as "a form of intellectual cooperative." Some of the topics debated included: the "Southern Question;" university reform; the "Roman Question;" the state budget; workers' organizations; the problem of the *latifundia*; land reform; and Italian foreign policy. There were also presentations on various political parties and movements: socialism; liberalism; fascism; revolutionary and reform syndicalism; anarchism and federalism. Rosselli presented a discussion on "Sindacalismo e rappresentanza politica" [Syndicalism and political representation] in the spring of 1923 and "Impressioni sulle ultime elezioni inglesi" [Impressions on the latest English elections] in November of that year.⁹¹

⁸⁹Piero Calamandrei, *Uomini e città della Resistenza*, Bari: Laterza, 1965; p. 58; see also his speech at the trial of Rosselli's assassins *Arringhe e discorsi: In memoria di Carlo e Nello Rosselli*. Naples: Oratoria, 1945, pp. 5-7.

⁹⁰Calamandrei, "Il manganello, la cultura e la giustizia," p. 71; Carlo Francovich, "Il Circolo di Cultura: l'ultima espressione di vita democratica a Firenze," in *Quaderni del Circolo Rosselli* XI, n. 1, January 1991, pp. 80-84.

⁹¹Calamandrei in *Non Mollare 1925*, pp. 72-76.

The driving force of the Circolo, besides the youthful enthusiasm of its members, was Gaetano Salvemini who encouraged the students to adopt a concrete and critical method in analyzing the various positions of the political parties. He was especially critical of the passive and "apolitical" stance of the reformist socialists; an idea later taken up by Rosselli. Salvemini's position as professor at the University of Florence gave him, in the eyes of those young intellectuals, a prestige of a very different sort from the politicians. That prestige was particularly strong at a moment in which the intellectual and ideal foundations of politics were being examined. From 1923 to 1925 antifascism in Florence was synonymous with the name Salvemini, and by extension, with his students Ernesto Rossi and Carlo Rosselli.⁹² Salvemini was well-known to the fascist police whereas Rosselli was still not under surveillance; Rossi profited from having an extremely common name and constantly moving about the country. Salvemini had "stolen" the brilliant Rossi from the fascists and had incurred the wrath of the nationalists by ridiculing their demands for territory in Dalmatia, Fiume and the Adriatic; neither the fascists nor the nationalists ever forgave his treasonous "betrayal." Salvemini

⁹²Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 43. On Salvemini, "The man who would not conform," see Iris Origo, *A Need to Testify: Portraits of Lauro De Bosis, Ruth Draper, Gaetano Salvemini, Ignazio Silone*, San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1984, pp. 128-190. Salvemini was a man who had known personal tragedy first-hand: in the great earthquake of 1908, he lost his wife and five children. In a letter of 1909 to the idealist philosopher Giovanni Gentile (later a major intellectual supporter of fascism), he wrote: "I move ahead, work, give lectures, prepare conferences, and throw stones at those who do not seem honest or sincere to me. People think me strong... In truth I am a miserable wretch, without home or hearth, who has seen the happiness of eleven years destroyed in two minutes. I have here on my table a few letters from my poor wife, my sister and the children. I read then little by little. I seem to hear their voices. And after having read a few, I stop, because a desperate sadness overwhelms me, and I want to die." Quoted in Aldo Rosselli, *La famiglia Rosselli: una tragedia italiana*, Milan: Bompiani, 1983, p. 150.

also introduced an intelligent and beautiful young English woman to the Circolo di Cultura--Marion Cave. Cave had developed into a passionate Italophile during her studies in England and in 1919 she arrived in Florence to teach at the British Institute. The Circolo group took to calling her "Biancafiore" [Whiteflower]; Filippo Turati's long-time companion, Anna Kuliscioff said she was "a ray of sunshine" in the serious group of antifascists.⁹³ Carlo was immediately taken by her idealism, beauty and intelligence; in 1926 they would marry.

The Circolo di Cultura was an elite group of middle-class intellectuals (students and professors), with no workers, artisans or peasants among its members. Workers in Florence attended the Università Popolare and the "Giubbe Rosse" [Redcoat] Clubs where writers and artists who had become radicals by their stay in Paris convened for discussion and debate.⁹⁴

The Circolo did not support any particular ideology or political party. In fact, an experiment in open-mindedness clearly shows the character of the club: in the interest of "fair play" and curiosity, two fascists were invited to present their case before the Circolo. The two were Giacomo Lumbroso (who later joined the antifascists and was killed by the Nazis in 1945) and Alberto Luchini. It was the latter who made the greater impression on the group. Luchini was a writer in the D'Annunzio style, translator of the Russian Jewish writer Leon Koshnitsky

⁹³Marion was born on 1 December 1896 to Ernest Cave and Maria Russell. Cfr. Gaetano Salvemini's obituary on her death in 1949, "Marion Rosselli," in *Il Ponte* V, n. 11, November 1949, pp. 143.

⁹⁴Garosci, *Vita* I, pp. 43-44.

and a veteran of D'Annunzio's Fiume adventure. His presentation glorifying irrationalism and an "intellectualized violence" came as a shock to the students of the group who all shared a common humanist mental framework. Luchini made it abundantly clear that the fascists scorned those values such as tolerance and the distrust of absolutism that the students considered the patrimony of civil society. As Marion Cave succinctly put it, "At that moment, we understood, indeed we deeply felt that there was an abyss between them and us, and nothing could bring us together, not even language."⁹⁵

On 23 November 1922, Arrigo Serpieri, veteran of the war and a specialist in the agrarian economy, spoke to the Circolo. Serpieri's presentation was praised by Rosselli in a letter the next day⁹⁶ for its plan to revitalize the agrarian policies of the country based on increased production, reduced consumption, acquisition of raw materials (scarce in Italy) and the exploration of new markets. Ironically, Serpieri was to become the only member of the Circolo di Cultura to defect to the fascists and was appointed under-secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture in 1923.

The reputation of the Circolo grew until the entire city recognized it as a bastion of free thinking, symbolized by the figure of Salvemini. For two years (1923-24) local authorities had suffered the existence of the Circolo, but on New Years' Eve 1924, the fascists moved against the society.

...on 31 December 1924, during the holiday afternoon, a squad of fascists entered the hall [of the Circolo] and destroyed it. From the windows that opened

⁹⁵Quoted in Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 44.

⁹⁶24 November 1922; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 149.

onto the Piazza della Trinità, they threw all the furniture, books and journals; and at the foot of the statue of Justice [in the piazza], they made a great bonfire. Passers-by stared with curiosity, and a sanitation truck, conveniently sent earlier by the diligent mayor, waited on the side for the bonfire to end, to whisk away the burned remains. Several days later, the prefect ordered the dissolution of the Circolo di Cultura, because its activity "provoked the just resentment of the dominant party," and could incite "grave disruptions of public order..."⁹⁷

The timing and coordination of the attack, along with other "punitive expeditions" in Florence and the decree issued only days later⁹⁸ left no doubt that the entire episode was planned by the authorities in advance; those responsible included the prefect (Garzaroli), the mayor of Florence, Antonio Garbasso (professor of physics at the University), the military and the police.⁹⁹

Alessandro Levi, another member of the Circolo, happened to be passing Piazza della Trinità at five in the afternoon that 31 December. Seeing the great doors wide open on a holiday, he climbed the stairs and confronted about a dozen fascists who were busy throwing furniture out the windows. With complete calmness he inquired as to what was going on; after a polite threat from those busy at work, he left and notified the other members. Thinking that Serpieri, who was now a member of the new government, might be able to help, a frantic phone call was placed to the under-secretary who brusquely responded: "this is simply the just reaction to the disgraceful campaign of slander that fascism had the

⁹⁷Calamandrei, *Arringhe e discorsi*, p. 7; "Il manganello, la cultura e la giustizia," p. 79.

⁹⁸Reproduced in *Non Mollare 1925*, table XLVI.

⁹⁹Ibid.

weakness to suffer for too long."¹⁰⁰

In a satirical commentary on the entire episode, an article appeared shortly afterwards in *Non Mollare!*, one of the first antifascist underground newspapers:

...this Circolo was a real and true association to commit crime, worthy of much more severe repression than the clandestine bomb factory, since these conspirators were concerned with manipulating that explosive which is much more potent than nitroglycerine--culture...we are pleased to inform the Illustrious Prefect that the evening of 31 December was a very edifying spectacle for every person who loves civil life to see the wicked ingredients with which the conspirators used to prepare their betrayals burning in that beautiful bonfire in Piazza della Trinità...we can in fact confide in the Illustrious Prefect that all the components of that Circolo, foreseeing the just destruction of their venue, were able to hide in their cranial boxes, with the hope that the Authorities will not notice, a supply of that explosive, whose evil power we mentioned above; and with that contraband cleverly hidden under their hats, they circulate undisturbed in the streets of Florence, among the conformists that do not suspect, alas!, their perverse intentions.¹⁰¹

The Circolo di Cultura was not the only association destroyed in Florence during the early days of fascist rule. Squads of fascists assaulted and destroyed the British Institute, the Università Popolare and its library. As a final injustice and with bitter irony, the hall of the Circolo was turned over by the authorities of the city to the "Circolo di Cultura Fascista."¹⁰²

By early 1924, beginning his university career as a professor of political economy in Milan, Rosselli frequented the reformist circles of the Socialist Party, cultivating personal and political relationships with Turati, Treves, Modigliani and Matteotti among others. Characteristically, he also developed ties to antifascists

¹⁰⁰Calamandrei, "Il manganello, la cultura e la giustizia," p. 79.

¹⁰¹The entire article is reproduced in *Non Mollare 1925*, table XLVII.

¹⁰²Calamandrei, "Il manganello, la cultura e la giustizia," p. 31.

who were not in the socialist camp such as the journalist Carlo Silvestri (later a fascist) and the republicans Cipriano Facchinetti and Raffaele Rossetti, founder of the important journal *Viribus Unitis*. What was important to Rosselli was not so much one's party affiliation (usually based on an abstract ideology), but one's visceral opposition to fascism.

His association with Einaudi and Cabiati at Bocconi University in Milan led to a series of articles and book reviews on political economy which appeared in the journal *Riforma Sociale* between 1924-1926. The rector of the university, Angelo Sraffa, recognized Rosselli's vitality and intellectual rigor and proposed several projects in which they would collaborate, such as a law and economics review. Carlo was also able to meet Angelo's son Piero Sraffa who was teaching economics at the University of Perugia and would return to Milan on the weekends. The younger Sraffa, at first close to the *Ordine Nuovo* group in Turin, but later attracted to the PSU, would be instrumental in preserving the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci. Piero and Carlo, both interested in classical English economics, became friends and passed many evenings in discussion.¹⁰³ It was in 1926 that Piero Sraffa published his "Sulle relazioni fra costo e quantità prodotta" that challenged the classical theories of competition and which was to have an effect on Rosselli's own economic thinking.¹⁰⁴

His university lectures were well received by faculty and students. While

¹⁰³Letter of 15 December 1923; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 190.

¹⁰⁴Tranfaglia, p. 135.

teaching at Bocconi University in Milan, he was asked by the leaders of the PSU and the CGL to give ten lectures for the Università Proletaria; Rosselli enthusiastically accepted their invitation. He welcomed the challenge of speaking to workers and party members, which would require a language different from the university lecture hall. On 7 Feb 1924, he wrote to his mother in Florence:

The lesson on Tuesday went extremely well. As usual, there were many people. I am content. I have given up writing the text; I bring only notes. In that way I prepare the lecture much more rapidly and I have time for other things. I no longer speak from the desk, but stand before the table or even sitting on the table! By now the ice is broken and I feel *à mon aise*.

and on 13 Feb:

Yesterday I held my seventh lecture, which ended to great applause! It went extremely well. I believe I presented the two theses, protectionism and free trade, in a manner that interested the public and in a way that was sometimes dramatic... Friday I will speak on the gross national product and its division among the various classes.¹⁰⁵

Besides protectionism and free trade, other topics of his lectures included the influence of trade unions, the history of economics, methodology, pure and applied economics, and economic stability and crises.¹⁰⁶ The preparation for the lectures stimulated a renewal of his desire to write a history of the workers' movement in Italy since 1900, a work he never completed.¹⁰⁷

Although Rosselli did not formally register with the PSU until July of 1924, one month after the assassination of the PSU deputy Giacomo Matteotti, he

¹⁰⁵Letters of 7 and 13 February 1924; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 210-213.

¹⁰⁶Letter undated from Milan; in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 223.

¹⁰⁷Ibid. Nello was working on a study of the early stages of the workers' movement in Italy.

was actively involved in socialist activities in Milan, such as the Università Proletaria and writing for the youth newspaper of the party, *La Libertà*.

On 23 July 1923, Mussolini's regime passed the Acerbo Law which stipulated that any party that received the largest number of votes (provided that this was more than 25% of the votes cast) would be granted two-thirds of the 535 seats in Parliament; the remaining seats would be divided proportionally among the other parties. This "electoral reform" was passed with the support of the liberals, right-wing Catholics and of course, the fascists. On July 15, the bill passed the Chamber with 235 deputies voting for and 139 voting against (mostly Socialists and Communists) and 77 abstentions (mostly Popolari).¹⁰⁸ The Acerbo Law led to a fierce debate as to whether or not the democratic parties should participate in the 1924 elections or abstain. By early 1924, it became clear that the Left could not reconcile its differences to form an electoral alliance: the PCd'I and the PSU refused to moderate their positions, and the PSI, in the middle, would side with neither the PSU on its right nor the PCd'I on its left.¹⁰⁹

From Milan, Rosselli wrote to his mother 18 Dec 1923:

The opposition must abstain as a whole or it must necessarily participate. One has the impression that the fascists do not feel secure. With eight days of true and secure freedom the regime, at least legally, would be overthrown. The tragedy of the crisis is that the dominators feel perfectly that the masses hate them and follow them sheepishly and that the bourgeois *élite* is distancing itself. How

¹⁰⁸*Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹Alexander DeGrand, *The Italian Left in the Twentieth Century: A History of the Socialist and Communist Parties*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989, p. 54.

do you foresee a legal solution?...¹¹⁰

Matteotti

Giacomo Matteotti was from a prosperous family near Rovigo, graduated from the University of Bologna with a degree in law, and had traveled extensively throughout Europe, learning English at Oxford. After an apprenticeship in the Po Valley organizing agricultural workers and serving as mayor of Villamarzana, he was elected to Parliament in 1919 as a moderate socialist. An ardent pacifist, he was against Italy's participation in the first world war, but served in the army. After the schism of January 1921 at Livorno, when the left wing broke off to form the PCd'I, Matteotti became the first secretary of the PSU in October 1922. The PSU attracted many of the most important members of reformist socialism, in addition to the leaders of the CGL. The party's weakness was precisely in this alliance of political antifascists with labor leaders who were willing to make compromises with fascism in order to protect their unions.¹¹¹

The national elections of April 1924 were to be carried out under the provisions of the Acerbo Law. Voting took place under conditions of intimidation and widespread fraud. As it turned out, the PNF had no need of the Acerbo Law; the national ticket (the so-called *listone* or "big list") brought 374 supporters of Mussolini to power, of whom 275 were fascists. The remaining seats were

¹¹⁰*Epistolario familiare*, p. 192.

¹¹¹DeGrand, p. 51.

divided among the opposition with the Socialists winning 46, the Popolari 39, smaller democratic groups with 30 and the PCd'I with 19.¹¹²

On 30 May, Matteotti rose in the Chamber of Deputies and presented a scathing attack on voting "irregularities."¹¹³ The Acerbo Law represented the end of true parliamentary rule in Italy; fraud and intimidation deprived Mussolini's government of any legitimacy. For an hour and a half, citing innumerable episodes around the country, with a pile of handwritten notes before him and in a clear, unwavering voice, Matteotti documented the abuse of power by fascist squads and officials. Constantly interrupted by the fascist deputies who threatened retaliation in the form of beatings or worse, the socialist deputy continued his denunciation as Mussolini, in attendance, listened without uttering a word. At the end of his speech, seeing Mussolini leave the Chamber and return to his office at Palazzo Chigi, Matteotti turned to a colleague and said, "You may now prepare my eulogy." Bursting into the office of Giovanni Marinelli, administrative secretary of the PNF, Mussolini exploded: "If you weren't all a pack of cowards, no one would have dared to make that speech...People like Matteotti, after having said certain things, should not be allowed in circulation..."¹¹⁴

¹¹²*Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, p. 3.

¹¹³Giacomo Matteotti, *Discorsi parlamentari* II, Rome: Camera dei Deputati, 1970; pp. 873-88. Matteotti's accusations are reprinted in *The Fascisti Exposed*, trans. E.W. Dickes, (first English publication, 1924), New York: Howard Fertig, 1969.

¹¹⁴*Il delitto Matteotti*, eds. Guido Gerosa and Gian Franco Vené. Milan: Mondadori, p. 24. Note the historical parallel with Henry II and Thomas Beckett. See also Gaetano Arfè, *Il delitto Matteotti*, Bologna: Cappelli, 1973.

Four days later, in Mussolini's newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia*, there was the following in italics: "Mussolini found the conduct of the majority too forbearing, since the honorable Matteotti gave a monstrosly provocative speech..."; on 8 June the same newspaper openly declared that: "Matteotti is a molecule of this mob that the Duce will sweep away with a forceful gesture."¹¹⁵

Two days later, on 10 June, while walking alongside the Tiber River in Rome, Matteotti was abducted by several men and forced into a black Lambda Lancia automobile. His body was found two months later in the countryside outside of Rome.

The abduction of Matteotti in June and the discovery of his body in August created the most serious challenge yet to Mussolini's regime. Immediately denounced in Parliament--the opposition parties demanded his resignation as Carlo Sforza called for his arrest--and the press (both in Italy and abroad), fascism seemed to be on the brink of collapse.

Those responsible for the assassination, sensing that they might be served up as scapegoats or fearing for their lives, began composing "testimonials" and "memoirs" incriminating Mussolini and the upper echelons of the fascist hierarchy. These documents were then used to blackmail fascist party leaders into silence. Several of the documents would later be published by Rosselli and others

¹¹⁵Quoted in Rosselli's essay "Eroe tutto prosa," *Almanacco socialista 1934*, Paris: PSI, 1933, pp. 37-40; reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, p. 266-68.

in one of the first underground papers, *Non Mollare!*¹¹⁶

One week after Matteotti's abduction, Mussolini met with Vittorio Emanuele III who refused to remove Mussolini from office. The king's refusal to act came as a severe blow to the opposition, who had hoped that since the king had appointed Mussolini, he now would have to ask for Il Duce's resignation. The Left would never forget this betrayal on the part of the king, an event that lifted the veil from the eyes of many.

The Matteotti assassination forced the opposition to decide: would they continue their legalitarian methods, some still hoping for monarchical intervention, to depose Mussolini? Most refused to consider the use of violence or illegal methods to defeat fascism. The most important response to the assassination was the "Aventine Secession." Deputies from the Communists and Socialists to the Republicans and Popolari withdrew from the Chamber and took the name of Gaius Gracchi's protest movement during the ancient Roman Republic when he withdrew to one of the seven hills of Rome (the Aventine). The most energetic and outspoken leaders of the modern Aventine Secession were Antonio Gramsci of the PCd'I, Filippo Turati of the PSU and Giovanni Amendola of the Unione Democratica Nazionale. Amendola, an important journalist who had studied philosophy and was critical of the positivist tradition in Italy, had founded the journal *Il Mondo* in January 1922 to give voice to a moderate antifascist current

¹¹⁶For the story of this underground newspaper, see *Non Mollare 1925*. Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1955; especially the essay by Gaetano Salvemini "Il Non Mollare," pp. 3-42; See also Frank Rosengarten, *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press 1919-1945*, pp. 64-67.

in Italy. *Il Mondo* became the mouthpiece for the Aventine Secession, and in December 1924 published Cesare Rossi's "Memoriale" which directly implicated Mussolini in Matteotti's assassination. On 1 May 1925 it also published Benedetto Croce's "Manifesto of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals" in response to Giovanni Gentile's "Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals."¹¹⁷ Nello Rosselli, in his own defiant gesture against the regime, joined Amendola's Unione Democratica Nazionale.

Amendola was destined to suffer the same fate as Matteotti and Gobetti: in 1926, he was severely beaten by fascist thugs and fled to France. He never recovered and died in Cannes on April 7 1926.¹¹⁸

On the tenth anniversary of Matteotti's death, Rosselli wrote a commemoration that appeared in the *Almanacco socialista 1934*. In the decade after his assassination, Matteotti, while not the first nor the last martyr to fascism, had become identified as the symbol of antifascism. In recalling his first meeting with Matteotti, along with Piero Gobetti, Rosselli wrote that both he and Gobetti had noticed Matteotti's *serietà* and avoidance of rhetoric. And in words that revealed something about Rosselli himself: "Antifascism was for Matteotti an instinctive, intimate fact; more a moral imperative than a political one."¹¹⁹

The fascists were furious with Matteotti for his political style as much as for his political ideas. When Mussolini thundered, "We have left 3,000 dead in

¹¹⁷*Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, pp. 19, 44.

¹¹⁸Giampiero Carocci, *Giovanni Amendola*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1956.

¹¹⁹"Eroe tutto prosa," in *Scritti dell'esilio I*, p. 265.

the streets of Italy!," Matteotti replied, "Pardon, 144, according to your newspaper." When Mussolini claimed that "Fascism has put an end to strikes. The trains run. The authority of the State has been restored!," Matteotti, to the stupefaction of the fascists, reminded everyone of the Duce's articles of 1919-1920 in which he had sung the praises of strikes and advocated the invasion of the factories, shops and land.¹²⁰

For Rosselli, Matteotti was a model in several ways.¹²¹ Their lives were similar: both born into the wealthy bourgeoisie, both determined to change the conditions in Italy, both refusing to be seduced by the attraction of the revolutionary mystique and its rhetoric. Hence Rosselli's description of Matteotti as a hero "tutto prosa"--all prose and not rhetorical.

Unlike other bourgeois intellectuals, Matteotti's socialism was not a passing fancy of youth; or as Rosselli wrote in words that were obviously self-referential, it was not

...the romantic adventure of a bourgeois heretical youth who is a revolutionary at twenty, a radical at thirty (matrimony plus career), reactionary ["forcaiolo"--literally "a hangman"] at forty...Born rich, he had to overcome the difficulties that rightly oppose rich socialists. He did not overcome them with demagogic outbursts, with mystical renunciations, or squandering money on electoral banquets or in paternalistic cooperatives and unions, but by personally participating in the movement for proletarian emancipation, forming free workers' institutions, organizing the peasants...

And in words that now seem eerily prophetic:

This type of antifascist, the prosaic hero, was destined to be killed. Just

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹U.A.Grimaldi, "Matteotti e Rosselli," in *Critica Sociale*, LXIX, n. 6, 24 June 1977, p. 9.

as Amendola and Gobetti had to die. As Rossi, Gramsci, Bauer, and many other Matteottis will die if we don't save them.¹²²

The Matteotti assassination acted as the catalyst which pushed Rosselli into active participation in Socialist politics and antifascism. In a letter to Piero Gobetti in early July, Rosselli made clear his intention to join Matteotti's PSU:

I believe that I will shortly enter the PSU, probably with a group of friends, with Salvemini and Jahier...It is an attempt that must be tried since the hour has come for all to assume their post in battle within the parties. Only in this way, perhaps, will we avoid the cauldron of tomorrow. And only in this way will it be possible, with the entrance of new forces agreeing on a lowest common denominator, to exert within the orbit of the respective parties that positive work of clarification that will greatly facilitate the solution for tomorrow.¹²³

For Rosselli, the Matteotti crisis was a turning point: either the regime would be brought down by the opposition, or it would survive and consolidate its power. Although he still felt that the political parties would be the vehicle for the overthrow of fascism, he was critical of their passive and legalitarian tactics. Soon he would become disillusioned with their tactics and strategy.

On 20 June 1924 Rosselli organized a meeting of the Circolo di Cultura to discuss a course of action; ten days later in Milan, he attended the funeral of a worker killed by the fascists.¹²⁴ He was correct in sensing the hesitancy on the part of party leaders to act. The journalist Max Ascoli recalled, in his American exile, the setting in Rome after the Matteotti assassination:

¹²²"Eroe tutto prosa," pp. 267-68.

¹²³The letter is partially reprinted in *Le riviste di Piero Gobetti*, eds. Lelio Basso and Luigi Anderlini. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1961, pp. lxxxiv; the original is held at the Archivio Centro Gobetti in Turin. I wish to thank Dr. Pietro Polito at the Centro Gobetti for his generous assistance.

¹²⁴Letter of 30 June 1924; in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 228.

We went almost every night to a restaurant behind the Pantheon with the leaders of the Socialist Party: Turati, Treves, Canepa and others. For a period of a week or ten days there was no sign of the fascists on the streets of Rome. It was known that the people of Trastevere, all republicans, were ready to march with their clubs and revolvers. They only awaited the orders of the Aventine leaders. Carlo and I wasted our breath in asking: "Why don't you make them come? What other way is there to free ourselves?" But no one wanted to give the order...¹²⁵

¹²⁵Quoted in Tranfaglia, p. 179.

CHAPTER III

AUTOCRITICA

Just in proportion as he is sentient and restless, just in proportion as he reacts and reciprocates and penetrates, is the critic a valuable instrument.

Henry James
Criticism (1893)

I do not believe in the scientific proof of socialism;
I do not claim to possess absolute truth...

Carlo Rosselli
"Liberalismo socialista" (1923/24)

The Critique of Italian Socialism and Liberalism

Rosselli's public critique of the Italian socialist and liberal traditions began in the summer of 1923 with an article that appeared in Turati's *Critica Sociale*.¹ A month earlier, Rosselli had written to Novello Papafava, a young intellectual who was working with Gobetti on *La Rivoluzione liberale* in Turin. Papafava had contributed articles seeking an ideological renewal of liberalism which had

¹"Liberalismo socialista," *Critica Sociale* (XXXIII), 1-15 July 1923, pp. 203-204.

attracted Rosselli's attention. The only possibility of a renaissance of liberalism, according to Rosselli in his letter, was for the spirit of liberalism to inform the groups and parties that had the greatest contact with the masses, above all the socialists. "I, for the very little that I can do, will work for a revision--in a liberal sense--of the socialist methods."² The letter goes on to suggest a possible coalition against fascism; one that would span the political spectrum from liberal Catholics such as Don Luigi Sturzo, classical liberals like Luigi Albertini and Count Carlo Sforza (whom Carlo had recently met) to moderate socialists like Turati, democrats such as Amendola, and independent radicals like Salvemini. It would be a coalition based on antifascism as the common denominator. After the defeat of Mussolini's regime, each group would then go its own way in a free political system. This was to be a central tenet of Rosselli's antifascism.

"Liberalismo socialista" generated considerable interest among left-wing intellectuals. In a letter to his mother shortly after its publication and just before a trip to Paris, Rosselli modestly noted that the article had struck a chord with several of the leading figures of antifascism.³ In fact, Gobetti was so impressed with the piece that he published a similar article with the same title by Rosselli a year later in his own journal preceded by the following commentary:

...The thought of Rosselli is of a socialist who has not been extraneous to the criticisms and demands of *Rivoluzione liberale*. Once it is admitted, as Rosselli admits, that socialism is the conquest on the part of the proletariat of a relative

²ACS, busta 501. Reprinted in G. Rossini *Il delitto Matteotti tra il Viminale e l'Aventino*. Bologna, 1966; pp. 129-130 and partially reprinted in Tranfaglia, pp. 121-22.

³Letter of 21 July 1923; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 172.

economic autonomy and the aspiration of the masses to affirm themselves in history, the most difficult obstacle to a rapprochement has been surpassed. Our liberalism is also socialist if one accepts the interpretation of Marxism and of socialism that we offer. It is enough that one accepts that all freedoms are solidary and integral. In the present state of things, it seems indispensable that a socialist intervenes in the discussion...on the theme of the renewal that Rosselli affirms has silently been created in the last years within the socialist party.⁴

In a letter to Gobetti that accompanied the article, Rosselli had modestly written:

"I don't believe I've said anything new or profound. It is a draft of an organic arrangement made from a point of view a little different from the usual."⁵ In a letter written home though, he revealed: "I believe it is destined to spark fierce polemics. But I am in a very strong position and above all, it seems to me, rather original."⁶

The essay begins with an examination of the history of liberalism in order to clarify a present anomaly: how is it that men as diverse as Antonio Salandra, Luigi Albertini, Luigi Einaudi, Giovanni Amendola, Mario Missiroli and Filippo Turati all call themselves "liberals"? Salandra, prime minister from March 1914 until June of 1916, was instrumental in bringing Italy into World War I on the side of the Entente; he exalted national values, proclaimed the absolute authority of the State, and allied himself with reactionary currents in the Vatican. In a speech given at La Scala Opera House in Milan, Salandra welcomed fascism because it restored the authority of the state even while sacrificing freedom; he

⁴*La Rivoluzione liberale*, 15 July 1924, p. 114; Rosselli's essay and Gobetti's commentary are reprinted in *Opere Scelte di Carlo Rosselli* I, p.107-128.

⁵Quoted in Tranfaglia, p. 172, note 53.

⁶Letter of 13 July 1924; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 228-29.

pointed out that "the essential element of the State is authority not freedom."⁷ Salandra, wrote Rosselli, was really a reactionary; but since one does not vote for "reactionaries" the euphemism "liberal" applies to almost everyone. Luigi Albertini, editor of Italy's leading liberal daily the *Corriere Della Sera* of Milan, defended the constitutional state and criticized both clericalism and socialism in his paper. The Libyan War of 1911 and the First World War pushed his politics further to the right. Einaudi, a collaborator of Albertini's on the *Corriere Della Sera*, supported classic liberal economic theories and taught at the University of Turin during the fascist period without provoking any opposition to Mussolini's regime.⁸ Giovanni Amendola, philosopher and journalist, had been a nationalist member of the Liberal Party. For Rosselli, men like Albertini, Einaudi and Amendola embodied the classical, or English, form of liberalism.⁹ Mario Missiroli, another journalist, was editor of *Il Resto di Carlino* in his native city of Bologna. In 1921 he was forced to resign from the newspaper *Il Secolo* because of several antifascist articles, but in the 1930s he "converted" to fascism. Turati was the principal founder of the PSI in 1892 and editor of *Critica Sociale*, the major journal for the diffusion of Marxism in Italy.

This confusion of terminology and labels did not exist when liberalism had to confront the absolutist ideology of Church and State two centuries ago. "After

⁷Quoted in "Liberalismo socialista," *Opere Scelte di Carlo Rosselli* I, p. 111.

⁸Luigi Einaudi eventually became the second president of the Republic of Italy, 1948-1955.

⁹"Liberalismo socialista," in *Opere Scelte* I, p. 112.

the French Revolution, the word liberalism indicated something very precise: liberals were those who opposed the absolute authority of Church and State and saw freedom as the fundamental instrument for human progress."¹⁰

With the definitive defeat of the absolutist heritage, everyone declared themselves "liberals" and recognized a common set of freedoms: freedom of worship, of thought, of association, of the press. Yet many of these late nineteenth and early twentieth century liberals refused to countenance that the liberal ideology might be historically conditioned, if not determined. For them, liberalism had been defined and defended--it could not be something that evolved. Hence the oxymoron of "conservative-liberals" as defenders of the monarchical, constitutional state in Italy after unification.

For Rosselli, liberalism was an "indispensable premise for all successive reasoning" yet he was very clear on its historicist character:

...liberalism does not consist of a static ensemble of principles and norms. Instead, it must be considered as continual becoming, in perpetual renewal, a perennial overcoming of the positions already reached. The concrete content of liberalism changes through time; that which is fundamental is the spirit, the immortal function, the dynamic and progressive element inherent in it.¹¹

What Rosselli brought to this debate on the nature and ideology liberalism was a distinction between liberalism as a **system** and liberalism as a **method**. The supporters of liberalism as a system conceived of it as a collection of economic, social and juridical principles that were immutable. The system was bound up in

¹⁰Ibid., p. 108.

¹¹Ibid., p. 109.

the words "bourgeois capitalism." Accepting those minimum freedoms stated above (freedom of religion, of speech, of the press, of association), it adds the freedom of unlimited private property, the right of inheritance, free enterprise, free-trade, (for some, liberalism and free-trade were synonymous) the State conceived of as an organ of the police (the "night-watchman").¹²

Those who viewed liberalism as a method held that its fundamental premise was that the free persuasion of the majority is the best method of arriving at the truth.¹³ The method must be understood as a complex of norms that are at the base of the civilization of Europe; they function

...like a set of rules of the game that all participants in the struggle are committed to respect in order to insure the peaceful coexistence of citizens and classes, to maintain disagreements within certain tolerable limits, permitting various parties and classes their rise to power, to channel innovating and progressive forces into legal methods.¹⁴

In short, for Rosselli, liberalism as method was "the minimum common denominator" for civilization.

What characterized liberals such as Albertini, Einaudi, and Amendola was their contradictory effort of trying to blend the system with the method. While this may have been possible, indeed necessary in the middle of the nineteenth century, for the twentieth century it was an anachronism. Their liberalism was one that was

¹²Ibid.

¹³For an examination of how pragmatism is used by historians in determining "truth" in the context of post-modernism and multiculturalism, see Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacobs, *Telling the Truth About History*, New York: Norton, 1994.

¹⁴*Socialismo liberale*, pp. 109-10.

completely abstracted from daily practice, trapped in a "theoretical wall of China" and ultimately conservative. The drama and tragedy of Italian liberalism, for Rosselli, was that it gave birth to a creature and then clipped its wings; it generated subversive currents only to then deny those currents the faculty, the right, even the possibility of overcoming the reality from which they had sprung, namely, capitalist society.¹⁵

Others, such as Missiroli and Prezzolini saw liberalism as the intellectual and political patrimony of an elite; that liberalism can never be extended to the masses and that between the method and the masses there exists an unbridgeable abyss. Rosselli charged that this position, held by Missiroli and especially Prezzolini, led to "black skepticism" and a tacit admission of the bankruptcy of liberalism. Because, as Rosselli wrote:

a liberalism that remains entrusted to the virgin and sovereign mind of some philosopher or historian, or historian-philosopher, a liberalism that is not grafted on to a practical mass movement, that does not gradually inform the spirit of the masses, that does not try to conquer the forces that express and fulfill--even unconsciously--a liberal function in society, is a pure abstraction.¹⁶

The liberalism of the nineteenth century cannot be the liberalism of the twentieth; just as the liberalism of the nineteenth century was not the liberalism of the eighteenth century.¹⁷

It was commonly denied that liberalism and democracy had anything in

¹⁵Ibid., p. 113.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 116-17.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 117.

common, even to the point of opposing one against the other. But for Rosselli, "the second is nothing if not the logical development of the first, and the first does not exist in substance in a representative modern State without the second."¹⁸

How though, is liberalism to be established in those countries without the experience and tradition of an England? Citing Macaulay's essay on Milton, Rosselli agreed that freedom is the only cure for the problems of a liberty that has only recently been attained. If the people had to wait until they were worthy of being granted freedom, in truth they might wait in eternity.¹⁹

But political liberty and freedom, in and of themselves, are not enough. Without some degree of economic autonomy the individual is still denied the possibility of the full development of his or her personality and society is still not fully evolved. "It is not a coincidence that the poorest peoples and the most backward economic societies are the easiest prey for dictatorship..."²⁰ What does freedom of worship mean to a man who has no bread; what is political liberty for one who has no control over his own resources? Liberty and freedom have a different meaning in different historical and social contexts:

...while for the bourgeoisie, the concession and the conquest of political liberty constituted the sublimation, the coronation of its already affirmed economic and cultural power, for the proletariat it represents if not the beginning of the

¹⁸Ibid., p. 117.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 118.

²⁰Ibid., p. 119. These arguments would later be further developed in *Socialismo liberale*.

struggle for emancipation, the premise, the instrument for its rapid attainment.²¹

Citing the liberal historian Guido De Ruggiero, Rosselli interpreted the bourgeois revolution as one that legitimized, consolidated and consecrated its social position while refusing to extend liberalism to the masses. The socialists must take this task upon themselves: to bring liberalism, in the fullest sense of the word, i.e. complete personal autonomy, to the proletariat and peasants.

Socialism, interpreted as the aspiration of the people to affirm themselves in history, to participate in the historical process as active protagonists, is a perennial becoming, something which is never achieved once and for all. It is an ideal of life, of action that propels society to surpass its own positive results; in short, it is the idea of an infinite progress, or more accurately, progression. It is this spirit, according to Rosselli, that binds socialism and liberalism.²² This is precisely what the official socialist parties in Europe have ignored or condemned at their own peril: "The recent experiences, all the experiences of the past thirty years, have hopelessly condemned the primitive programs of the socialists. State socialism especially--collectivist, centralizing socialism--has been defeated."²³ The abolition of private property and the expropriation of the means of production were potent myths: increased productivity, decreased and enjoyable labor, humanity freed from material needs, and the elimination of class conflict were to

²¹Ibid., p. 120.

²²Ibid., p. 124.

²³Ibid.

be the results. Instead, no one any longer believed in these "fairy tales" and many were wary of the enormous burden of the state bureaucracy, incompetence and the invasion of personal liberties. Rather than imprison themselves in theoretical models, modern socialists must jettison their dogmatic baggage and have the courage to have no theory, model or blueprint except experience. Only from experience can humanity grasp any indications for the future. Experience for Rosselli points to an indisputable premise: *Conditio sine qua non* is the conquest of economic autonomy; without this, nothing can be accomplished. Everything clashes against poverty; it is the great enemy.²⁴

This idea of autonomy was central to Rosselli's thought:

both in practice and in theory, an ideal of autonomy and liberty must be and can be the guide for socialists. One must proceed not from above to below, not from the center to the periphery, but inversely. Socialism in all its aspects must not be the fruit of imposition, but of conquest, indeed of **self-conquest**; it must be an autonomous creation of the working classes.

And in impassioned language he offered his own "act of faith:"

I do not believe in the scientific proof of socialism; I do not claim to possess absolute truth; I don't intend to bow my head before dogmas, nor do I delude myself into thinking I have the key to the future... I am a socialist because of an ensemble of principles, experiences, by the conviction brought about by the study of the evolution of the society in which I live; I am a socialist by education, by reaction, but also...by **faith** and by **sentiment**. I do not believe socialism will come about and that the working class will affirm itself in history by the inevitable evolution of things, human will notwithstanding. To those who speak this language to me, I reply with Sorel, and in this is all my voluntarism: **"socialism will be, but it might also not be."**²⁵

This "doubt" and "relativism"--what Rosselli called the "critical demon"--

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., p. 127. Emphasis in the original.

pushes the socialists into action, rather than passivity, induces a respect for their adversaries, and demands a continuous revisioning of their theoretical positions and practical actions; it is, in short, the liberal essence of socialism.

In the year between the publication of "Liberalismo socialista" in Turati's *Critica Sociale* and Gobetti's *Rivoluzione liberale*, Rosselli continued his critique of Italian socialism, and especially the PSI in two other articles: "La crisi intellettuale del Partito Socialista" and "Aggiunte e chiose al 'bilancio marxista'".²⁶ Together, the articles represent a penetrating analysis of the recent history of socialism in Italy and the role and function of the PSI. Since Turati remained above the fray, it fell to Claudio Treves to respond to Rosselli's criticism. For the next several years, the two debated Rosselli's main contention that socialism had become petrified in Italy and incapable of leading a mass revolution.

"La crisi intellettuale del Partito Socialista" appeared in *Critica Sociale* in November 1923. Although Rosselli later complained that Treves refused to publish a review written by Rosselli of Antonio Graziadei's recent book, it is important to note that both Turati and Treves permitted such a strong critique of their position to appear in the journal.²⁷

Rosselli's article was preceded by an editor's preface:

²⁶"La crisi intellettuale del Partito Socialista," *Critica Sociale* (XXXIII), 1-15 November 1923, pp. 325-28; "Aggiunte e chiose al 'bilancio marxista'," *Critica Sociale* (XXXIII), 1-15 December 1923, pp. 359-362. Both are reprinted in *Opere Scelte di Carlo Rosselli* I, pp. 83-106.

²⁷Tranfaglia, p. 169, note 38.

We welcome with sincere pleasure this article which attests to a noble passion and a holy spiritual restlessness. We have repeatedly affirmed the necessity of a bold and open-minded labor of self-criticism, of revision, of renewal; and we have thrown open the doors of our journal--as Rosselli recognizes and can attest--to the voices of the "heretics"...²⁸

The note went on to say that the editors had requested Rodolfo Mondolfo to respond to Rosselli's criticism, and this response appeared immediately following Rosselli's article in the same issue.²⁹

Several days later, Rosselli wrote that "La crisi intellettuale..." created much *retentissement* "and not only among the socialists." Concerning the second article, "Aggiunte e chiose al 'bilancio marxista'," Rosselli complained that the journal edited it in such a way as to make it more difficult to read and understand.³⁰

As they stand, the articles are a clear indictment of the policies of the PSI over the last two decades. In fact, "La crisi intellettuale..." begins with a startling declaration: "It has been at least fifteen years that the socialist movement in Italy has been struck by intellectual paralysis."³¹ Assuming this premise to be correct (and an argument can be made against Rosselli's thesis) what are the reasons for this state of affairs? Rosselli was convinced that this intellectual paralysis was the result of the nature of the diffusion of Marxism in Italy; particularly the fact that

²⁸*La Critica Sociale* (XXXIII), 1-15 November 1923, p. 325.

²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 328-30.

³⁰Letter of 12 December 1923; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 189.

³¹*Opere Scelte di Carlo Rosselli* I, p. 83.

the socialist movement had adopted Marxism as its official doctrine. And not only the Marxism of Marx (who we must not forget uttered those words that have haunted his followers ever since: "I am not a Marxist"), but the Marxism of a Kautsky, a Bernstein, a Sorel or a Mondolfo. While this diversity of thought can be perceived as a good thing--a sign of intellectual vitality and freedom--it has actually hindered the socialist movement in Italy. The problem arises when the theorists and ideologues of the workers' movement seek to reconcile, utilize and synthesize **all** the Marxist currents in a practical, pragmatic program of everyday action. The result was "all the problems of a rigid, authoritarian codification entrusted in reality to the works of Marx, and all the problems of free interpretation."³²

For several decades, there had been revisionists of Marx on the left and on the right but no one, "with the possible exception of Bernstein," saw what remained of use from the original body of Marx's work. This is what Rosselli called a theoretical judgement (*bilancio teorico*) of Marxist doctrine which can be summed up in Croce's famous phrase "that which is living and that which is dead in Marxism". Rosselli, although he had read Croce's most important work on Marxism, *Materialismo storico ed economia marxista* which first appeared in 1900, perhaps underestimated the Neapolitan philosopher. Croce's essay "Come nacque e come morì il marxismo teorico in Italia (1895-1900)" which appeared in 1937 (long after the philosopher's brief flirtation with Marxism) is a perceptive

³²Ibid., p. 84.

analysis of "how theoretical Marxism was born and died in Italy."

Characteristically, Croce dates the "death" of Marxism in Italy at precisely the time when his own interest in Marx's work was waning. But Croce was to maintain, even many years later, that the introduction of Marxism into Italian intellectual and cultural life at the end of the nineteenth century was a positive force which acted as a catalyst for new thinking. In fact, it was Croce's friend and mentor, Antonio Labriola, who had introduced Marxism into Italy and to Croce. In 1895, Labriola wrote to his former student about the appearance of a new journal in Paris called *Devenir Social* and recommended that Croce subscribe.³³ Croce declared that he was a better thinker and a better person for having gone through his Marxist phase. In his *Les Systèmes socialistes*, Pareto paired Croce with Georges Sorel as "two Marxists of great talent." H. Stuart Hughes though, describes Croce's flirtation with Marxism as a youthful indiscretion or "intellectual novelty" and that to describe Croce as a Marxist is "woefully inappropriate."³⁴ The American scholar Edmund Jacobitti sees Croce's Marxist phase as an aborted attempt to craft a personal political position.³⁵ Croce's most important Italian biographer, Fausto Nicolini, believes Croce's Marxist phase to be of paramount importance in his intellectual development and others seem to

³³H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930*. New York: Random House, 1977, pp. 83-84.

³⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 82-84.

³⁵Edmund Jacobitti, *Revolutionary Humanism and Historicism in Italy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981, pp. 62-76.

agree.³⁶

Rosselli had not only studied Croce's work on Marx but also the influential book by Rodolfo Mondolfo *Sulle orme di Marx* which appeared in a new and expanded (third) edition in 1923. Mondolfo, unlike Croce, did not pass through a Marxist "phase;" he became, and remained one of the most important Marxist philosophers in Italy. Unfortunately, the correspondence between Rosselli and Mondolfo has been lost, but we are able to reconstruct their intellectual relationship through secondary sources. Enrico Bassi, a young socialist close to Mondolfo, recalls that Rosselli wrote to Mondolfo soon after the third edition of *Sulle orme di Marx* appeared and praised Mondolfo for his originality and independence of thought in contributing to the formation of a philosophy of socialism, to be held completely autonomous from the thought of Marx. This though, may not have been Mondolfo's intention. When Rosselli was imprisoned on the island of Lipari (1928-29), he sent a letter to Ugo Guido Mondolfo, brother of the philosopher, in which Rosselli supported Mondolfo's ideas, "with a few objections."³⁷ In 1968, when Mondolfo was questioned about Rosselli's familiarity with Marx and his criticism of Mondolfo's position, the philosopher replied:

...According to my impressions and my opinion, Rosselli, who was a very serious student, must have directly known the work of Marx (and especially *Capital*)... Naturally, he could not have known the unpublished works (especially

³⁶Fausto Nicolini, *Benedetto Croce*. Turin: UTET, 1962; also David D. Roberts, *Benedetto Croce and the Uses of Historicism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, pp. 41-46.

³⁷Tranfaglia, pp. 150-51.

The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts and *The German Ideology*) and therefore he could not know that these works confirmed my interpretation of the philosophy of praxis; and this explains his insistence that I should present this [interpretation] as an original personal conception, rather than the genuine thinking of Marx.³⁸

Although Rosselli may have been mistaken in his criticism of Mondolfo, he was indebted to the philosopher, especially for the stress that Mondolfo placed on the importance of human will in history.

As a product of a certain time and place, Marxist doctrine could not explain all social and economic problems of the twentieth century. Rosselli, through his training as an economist, pointed out the flaws in Marx's labor theory of value. In addition to this theory, Marx's ideas on worsening business crises, the increasing poverty of the proletariat, capitalist concentration of wealth, the disappearance of the middle class and the dictatorship of the proletariat were shown to be mistaken by the early decades of the twentieth century. For Rosselli, a distinction had to be made between Marx the social scientist and Marx the propagandist; between the Marx of *The Communist Manifesto* and the Marx of *Capital* or *A Critique of Political Economy*. The masses have taken to the most superficial aspects of Marx and Marxism, but there remain two pillars in the Marxist pantheon that are still standing for Rosselli: historical materialism and the class struggle.³⁹ But as Rosselli was to write later, these are no longer the patrimony only of Marxists; the ideas have seeped into modern consciousness to

³⁸Letter of Rodolfo Mondolfo to Nicola Tranfaglia, 1 March 1968; cited in Tranfaglia, p. 171, note 50.

³⁹"La crisi intellettuale del Partito Socialista," in *Opere Scelte* I, p. 86.

such an extent that we are all, in a certain sense, "Marxists."⁴⁰ From idealist philosophers like Croce to historians like Gioacchino Volpe and Gaetano Salvemini, Marx's ideas have been inserted into the modern frame of thinking. "...the blood of Marx has silently been transfused into the hearts of even his most bitter enemies. What greater triumph could he have hoped for..."⁴¹

This leads Rosselli to what seems to be a semantic paradox: **"one can be a Marxist without being a socialist."**⁴² Marxism had become more a methodological principle of interpreting history than a philosophy of action for the working classes. Democratic and reformist socialists were opposed to the authoritarian and dogmatic spirit that informed Marxism in its present shape. A sane empiricism in the English fashion, wrote Rosselli, is a thousand times better than "this blind and tortuous dogmatism."⁴³

The Marxist parties in Europe, including the PSI, were handicapped by their rigid adherence to abstract theories. A political party needs the freedom to change with time and social conditions. Instead the fatal error was to consider Marxism as the final destination, rather than a liberating method. The result was entrapment in a closed intellectual system. As it has been noted many times since, Rosselli pointed out that Marxism developed into a school, and more than a

⁴⁰*Socialismo liberal*, p. 73.

⁴¹"La crisi intellettuale..." p. 87.

⁴²*Ibid.* Emphasis in the original.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 88.

school, a sect: a new Church with its own logic, discipline, dialectic, prophets and martyrs, its scholastic philosophers writing exegeses of the volumes of Marx and Engels.⁴⁴ He could have added, from personal experience, that like any other religion, those who disagreed were branded as "heretics" and suffered the consequences. If the central project of socialism is to be defined as the extension of political freedom and social justice to the working classes based on the liberal method, then we can understand how Rosselli excludes Marxists (as he conceives them) from the ranks of the socialists. He insists on the liberal method, **both inside and outside the party.**⁴⁵

In the closing paragraphs of "La crisi intellettuale...", Rosselli makes a plea that dogmas, slogans and "old formulas" be abandoned; that once a general line of theory and action has been accepted, each would be allowed to think on his own; that the socialist party make an appeal to the youth of Italy, especially those gathered into the various intellectual groupings of "Salveminians," "Voceans," "Leonardians," etc. It was necessary to reach out to these groups because "Although limited in number, they constitute a great force in a country so lacking in elites like our own."⁴⁶

The essay, as can be imagined, was challenged by the officials of the PSI. Rodolfo Mondolfo was given the task of responding in an essay "Le attività del

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 91.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 93. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 94.

bilancio" which appeared immediately following Rosselli's article. Rosselli responded to Mondolfo with "Aggiunte e chiose...". He denied any intention, as stated by Mondolfo, of "repudiating" Marxism. Perhaps, Rosselli admitted, the fault lay with himself for not being clear enough; but it would seem strange that Mondolfo would find much to criticize in the essay since Rosselli claims much of his interpretation is derived from none other than Mondolfo!

My principle aim was, and is, to establish with exactitude what is effectively meant by the word "Marxism," instituting, if need be, a sort of theoretical balance to arrive at a definition of the function that Marxism can and must exercise today.⁴⁷

But Rosselli contradicts himself: on the one hand he deplores the confusion arising from the various interpretations of Marx, all of which claim direct descent from the Master and all claiming to be "scientific:" on the other hand, he urges modern socialists not to be fearful of "doctrinal heresies."

A good deal of the ideological confusion arose from the equivocal use of language. Rosselli confessed to his own hesitation when using words such as "bourgeoisie," "proletariat," "class" and "capitalism" whose meanings change and even acquire a plurality of meanings, according to their use by the socialists and Marxists. Contrary to the accepted use of the words, and based on his own study of economic history, Rosselli insisted that "The bourgeoisie and the proletariat are no longer (and in an economic sense never were) two uniform blocks of forces."⁴⁸

⁴⁷Carlo Rosselli, "Aggiunte e chiose al 'bilancio marxista'," *Critica Sociale* (XXXIII), 1-15 December 1923; now in *Opere Scelte* I, p. 96.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 101.

In order to clarify the ideas of his first essay, Rosselli reaffirmed:

a) Marxist doctrine has been subjected to a multiplicity of contradictory interpretations... b) the common character of all revision, whether of the right or the left, was to demonstrate the errors in Marxism; specifically, the belief in the future collapse of capitalism [*catastrofismo*] and the problems with the labor theory of value... c) One can be a Marxist without being a socialist. In this sentence I synthesized all my observations.⁴⁹

Another indictment leveled against modern socialists was their failed relationship with the working masses--both urban proletariat and rural peasant. The one indisputable contribution of Marx, historical materialism, was completely unknown by the workers who instead were fed a steady diet of the worst aspects of Marxism: the apocalyptic and inevitable triumph of socialism, the historical function of violence, the labor theory of value.

...I believe that the socialist ideal, the methods of the reformists, can, indeed must be taught and diffused among the masses (and also--why not--among the "intellectuals") with simpler arguments, closer to life and practice. A little more faith and a little less science. Today, it is especially important to return to that conception, to that religious sense of socialism that characterized the first blazing ideal. Scientific demonstrations can be believed only up to a certain point.⁵⁰

The enemy is not so much a particular social class as a regime composed of complex elements; these economic, ethical, moral and juridical elements exist even within us, Rosselli pointed out. This being the case, a gradualist (based on acts not words), liberal (based on education and tolerance) and moral approach is the only logical alternative. Marxism must be given a more modest role in shaping

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 98-99.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 103.

the ideology and activities of the modern socialist party.

In the two essays, Rosselli introduced an idea that was to remain fundamental to his subsequent thinking and action: socialism must abandon the class character of Marxism because of philosophical reasons, and antifascism must abandon the ideology of class conflict in order to defeat fascism. The bourgeoisie had been the central character on the stage of history for the last five hundred years; its role was not yet over. True, the bourgeoisie no longer functioned in a liberal sense, yet there were segments of the bourgeoisie that could and did act as catalysts for the development of liberty in history. Obviously, Rosselli had himself and his antifascist colleagues in mind, most of whom were from the humanistically educated middle-classes. Even Antonio Gramsci was born to a father who worked in the state bureaucracy and a mother who was from a petty bourgeois family.⁵¹ Only the anarchists could truthfully claim to be lead by workers and peasants, symbolized in the great figure of Errico Malatesta.⁵²

Mondolfo responded again to Rosselli a month later with his essay "Contributo a un chiarimento di idee"⁵³ which insisted that Marxism was still the directing force, the "compass" of the workers' movement and that socialism could not be divorced from Marxism. This was the most serious disagreement

⁵¹John M. Cammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967. p. 4. See also the Introduction to *Letters From Prison*, 2 vols., ed. and with an introduction by Frank Rosengarten. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

⁵²*Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas*, ed. Vernon Richards. London: Freedom Press, 1984.

⁵³"Contributo a un chiarimento di idee," *Critica Sociale* (XXXIV), 1-15 January 1924, pp. 14-16.

between the two thinkers and I believe it stemmed from a more basic philosophical dispute. Both agreed that human free will was the defining factor in history, but Rosselli saw Marxism as essentially a determinist philosophy; indeed, all the efforts of the revisionists from Bernstein onward, according to Rosselli, were precisely to re-insert the element of human will into the determinist system of Marx. Mondolfo, on the other hand, read Marx, but perhaps not Marxism, as a philosophy of liberating human will, essentially a humanist vision of the world.⁵⁴

Rosselli, unlike most of his fellow socialists and antifascists, was well versed in the English political tradition from John Stuart Mill to the Fabians and the Labour Party.⁵⁵ Although Mill's essay *On Liberty* was not published in Italy until 1925,⁵⁶ Rosselli was familiar with the essay in the original English.⁵⁷ His anglophilia was furthered by a trip to England in the summer of 1923, when he met G.D.H. Cole, R.H. Tawney, the Webbs and members of the Fabian Society. It was on that trip that he was stopped at the border for carrying a prohibited "continental" edition of Dickens' *David Copperfield*.⁵⁸ In addition, Rosselli also studied the nineteenth-century liberalism of De Tocqueville and Guido De

⁵⁴See Mondolfo's *Umanesimo di Marx*. Turin: Einaudi, 1968.

⁵⁵See Rosselli's "Il Partito di Lavoro in Inghilterra," *Libertà* (I), n. 3, 1 February 1924; on the workers' movement in England, see his "Il movimento operaio," in *La Rivoluzione liberale* (III), nn. 13-14, 25 March-3 April 1924.

⁵⁶John Stuart Mill, *La libertà*. Turin: Einaudi, 1925.

⁵⁷Tranfaglia, p. 173, note 61.

⁵⁸See the letter from London of 28 July 1923; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 174-76.

Ruggiero's *Storia del liberalismo europeo*. Rosselli was searching for an ideal synthesis between his liberal principles and the socialist movement; a new formula that substituted not only the positivistic interpretation of Marxism but also the idealistic and neo-kantian revisionism of Marx that was beginning to circulate in Italy.⁵⁹

Non Mollare!

In January 1925 Rosselli began teaching political economy in Genoa at the Istituto Superiore. Carlo, who was not born a great public speaker, acquired the skill only after much effort. "I felt a terrible and humbling impression," he wrote to his mother, "on hearing myself addressed as 'Professor':" a few days earlier he had confessed, "The only thing that disturbs me a bit is the absolute **solitude** in which I find myself...give a thought to your exiled son." In a sarcastic post-script he wrote: "I think with horror of the publication of our correspondence. My place in history is in jeopardy."⁶⁰

While Rosselli fulfilled his duties as a professor in Genoa, he was also involved in one of the most important enterprises against the fascist regime--the publication of an underground journal that was committed to exposing the crimes of Mussolini and his supporters.

⁵⁹Tranfaglia, p. 159. On the history of revisionism in Italy, see Enzo Santarelli, *La revisione del marxismo in Italia*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1977.

⁶⁰Letter of 15 January 1924; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 247-49.

As a former journalist (he was for a time editor of the socialist party organ *Avanti!*), Mussolini was particularly sensitive to the power of the press in shaping public opinion and influencing political policy. The press would no longer be a vehicle to inform the people, but an instrument to acquire and maintain power, forge a "consensus" and establish hegemony. Accordingly, some of the first decrees issued by the regime restricted freedom of the press. Frank Rosengarten, in his ground-breaking study of the Italian antifascist press, reports the remarks of a fascist journalist:

On 17 October 1922, exactly two weeks before his assumption of power, Mussolini called a meeting in Milan of the directors of the leading fascist daily and weekly newspapers...Toward the end of his speech, Mussolini told the assembled journalists that..."it is quite possible that at a certain point we may no longer feel like tolerating the survival of some prominent newspapers."⁶¹

Although freedom of the press had been considered almost sacrosanct for the functioning of a liberal, parliamentary state, there was a history of press censorship in Italy after unification in 1870. The most recent and disturbing episode was the harassment and censorship of the socialist daily *Avanti!* during the first world war when it upheld the cause of non-intervention. On 15 July 1923 and 10 July 1924, king Victor Emanuel III signed two decrees that severely limited the freedom of the press; the first gave local fascist prefects the power to suppress publications and the second was in response to the frenzy of antifascist journalism in the wake of the Matteotti assassination. On 31 December 1925 another law was signed which effectively ended freedom of the press. By April 1927 all

⁶¹Frank Rosengarten, *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press, 1991-1945*, p. 10.

newspapermen were required by law to be register with the National Fascist Syndicate of Journalists. Mussolini, the former journalist, had "effectively reduced Italian journalists to the status of servants of the fascist regime."⁶²

This legal assault on the press was taken after the physical and often violent assaults that the fascist squads had carried out for several years. As early as 1919, fascist *squadristi* had undertaken punitive expeditions to intimidate Catholic, liberal and socialist writers. Often these expeditions ended with the destruction of printing presses and offices; physical violence against journalists was not uncommon. In April 1919, fascists destroyed the offices of *Avanti!* in Milan; in February 1921, Spartaco Lavagnini, editor of *L'Azione Comunista*, was murdered in Florence; during 1921 and 1922, the offices of Gramsci's *L'Ordine Nuovo* were repeatedly invaded by fascist blackshirts.⁶³ A favorite method of the fascists was to humiliate their opponents by forcing them to drink castor oil. People often suffered the same fate as Lavagnini. The two most famous cases were the attacks on, and subsequent deaths, of Piero Gobetti and Giovanni Amendola.

Piero Gobetti, founder and editor of *Energie Nuove* and *La Rivoluzione liberale* in Turin had published four of Rosselli's essays, including the important "Liberalismo socialista" in July 1924. After the Matteotti assassination, Gobetti increased his attacks against Mussolini, while at the same time supporting the

⁶²Ibid., pp. 11-14.

⁶³Ibid., p. 17.

legal approach of the Aventine Secession, hoping that the intellectual elite would rally the working classes into an effective opposition to the fascist regime. On 1 June 1925, Mussolini sent a telegram to the Prefect of Turin: "It has been reported to me that the well-known Gobetti has recently been in Paris and today is in Sicily. I ask you to keep me informed and to remain vigilant in order to make life doubly difficult for this stupid opponent of the government and of fascism."⁶⁴ Three months later, Gobetti was severely beaten by fascist blackshirts; he fled to Paris where he died of his injuries on 15 February 1926.⁶⁵

As noted above, the Circolo di Cultura in Florence was destroyed by a fascist squad on 31 December 1924. Several day later, on 3 January 1925, Mussolini gave his famous speech in Parliament in which he claimed full responsibility for the assassination of Matteotti and challenged his enemies to remove him from office. Knowing he had the full backing of the King, Mussolini imposed new decrees in the days that followed. The sacking of the Circolo di Cultura, the new wave of fascist violence, Mussolini's speech and the decrees against freedom of the press were the catalyst for Rosselli's next initiative in Florence: the publication and distribution of an underground newspaper.

In early January, hosting a group of students at his house in Florence, Gaetano Salvemini predicted, "Now that freedom of the press has been

⁶⁴The telegram is reproduced in *Le riviste di Piero Gobetti*, p. LXVII, note 2.

⁶⁵On Gobetti, see Paolo Bagnoli, *Il risorgimento eretico di Piero Gobetti*, Florence: Cooperativa editrice universitaria, 1976; and his second work on the same figure, *Piero Gobetti: politica e cultura in un intellettuale del Novecento*, Florence: Passigli, 1984. Also *Opere complete di Piero Gobetti*. Turin: Einaudi, 1969.

suppressed, you will see a clandestine press arise."⁶⁶ Returning two weeks later from a trip to Rome, Carlo Rosselli and Ernesto Rossi presented him with the first edition of *Non Mollare!* (Don't Give In!). According to Rossi, the idea to form a clandestine press was discussed as early as October 1924 but Salvemini insisted that the decision came only after 3 January 1925, since freedom of the press was not completely outlawed until 30 December 1924.⁶⁷ The newspaper was born in the Rosselli house in Florence which was rapidly becoming a kind of general headquarters for the young antifascists of that city; the name was suggested by Nello the historian, echoing the Mazzini battle cry. Rossi later wrote: "[Non Mollare] was exactly what we wanted to say: a reproach, an incitement, a command to all those who had a thousand reasons to prove that by now there was nothing left to do; to all those timid souls that accepted fascism as a *fait accompli*, adapting themselves to servitude for fear of something worse."⁶⁸

The paper, which appeared when it could, soon became a model for others in Italy and the fascist authorities in Florence became obsessed with uncovering the operation and those responsible. The paper only managed to exist ten months, but in that short period of time published several devastating documents against the regime. The contributors paid a heavy price: one suicide (Burrelli in Siena);

⁶⁶Gaetano Salvemini, "Il Non Mollare," in *Non Mollare 1925*, p. 3.

⁶⁷Salvemini, "Il Non Mollare," in *Non Mollare 1925*, p. 3. See also Massimo Legnani, "La stampa antifascista, 1926-1943," in *La stampa italiana nell'età fascista*, eds. V. Castronovo and N. Tranfaglia, Bari: Laterza, 1980.

⁶⁸Ernesto Rossi, "Il Non Mollare," *Il Ponte* I, n. 8, August 1945.

a surgeon, (Dino Vanucci) forced into exile to Brazil where he died; three who eventually were condemned to prison: Riccardo Bauer, Ernesto Rossi and Nello Tranquandi all sentenced to thirteen years prison and confinement; and three murdered on the night of 3-4 October 1925: Giovanni Becciolini, Gustavo Consolo, and the war veteran and former socialist deputy Gaetano Pilati.⁶⁹

All sorts of subterfuge were employed to put out the newspaper; it was never printed more than twice in the same place for fear of betrayal by some worker. An elaborate system was established where the paper would be printed in the late hours of the night and picked up in the early hours of the morning to be distributed throughout the city. Marion Cave, who acted as secretary, often had manuscripts, addresses and recent editions hidden under her clothes as she went about Florence. One edition, printed in via Santa Elisabetta by a shop owned by two brothers, was just off the press when word arrived that the police were on their way. Several thousand copies were bundled into a large suitcase and whisked away as the police arrived. The entire run was hidden with the frozen cadavers in the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova!⁷⁰ Carlo Rosselli personally financed much of the printing costs of the newspaper.

An extensive network of volunteers managed to bring the paper to other cities; the anarchist Camillo Berneri, student of Salvemini, was teaching in Umbria; Riccardo Bauer and Ferruccio Parri were in Milan; Max Ascoli, Tullio

⁶⁹Alessandro Levi, *Ricordi dei fratelli Rosselli*, p. 72.

⁷⁰The episode is recounted in Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 55 and Salvemini, "Il Non Mollare," p. 5.

Ascarelli and Umberto Zanotti-Bianco were responsible for Rome.

To those who felt the enterprise was a waste of time, Rossi and Rosselli argued that it was important to make some gesture, some defiant act, an example of civil disobedience, to reclaim a hard-won right that existed in all free societies. The paper carried the following under its masthead: "Bulletin of information under the fascist regime; Who receives the bulletin is morally bound to circulate it."

The first issue, dated January 1925, printed a manifesto on the first page:

We will publish this bulletin every week.⁷¹

We will report articles and news that cannot be published in the opposition newspapers.

Freedom of the word has not been granted us: we will take it.

In the title is our program...⁷²

The first issue also reported on an incident that occurred the previous November at the University of Florence. The opening of the 1924-25 academic year was to be commemorated by a solemn ceremony, since the Istituto di Studi was being granted formal status as the Università di Firenze. Instead, fascists were ready for Salvemini and his students and a general riot broke out. Inciting the fascist students was a Father Pistelli, an old acquaintance of Amelia Rosselli's before the war.⁷³

The fifth number of *Non Mollare!* (February 1925) published the notorious

⁷¹Only 23 issues were printed between January and October 1925.

⁷²*Non Mollare* 1925, table I.

⁷³Garosci, *Vita* I, p. 54.

"Filippelli memoir." Filippo Filippelli was the director of the fascist daily *Corriere Italiano* and one of those responsible for the assassination of Matteotti. On 14 June 1924, threatened by arrest for the murder of the Socialist Deputy, Filippelli composed his "memoir" and let it be known that it implicated the highest levels of the government in the Matteotti affair, including Mussolini. Another participant in the Matteotti murder, Cesare Rossi, head of the government press office, had also written a "memoir" on 15 June as insurance against being used as a scapegoat. Both the Rossi and Filippelli memoirs ended up in the hands of the Aventine leaders, who published only the former on 29 December 1924 in the nation's dailies. For some reason the more damaging Filippelli memoir was not printed. The next day, the fascist regime effectively ended any freedom of the press. The memoir made its way from the hands of Giuseppe Emanuele Modigliani,⁷⁴ socialist member of Parliament and brother of the painter Amedeo, to Emanuele A Prato to Rosselli and Rossi who published it in their paper. For a few days, *Non Mollare!* became more important than *Il Corriere della Sera*, the nation's pre-eminent daily.

Dumini [Amerigo Dumini wielded the dagger that killed Matteotti] is a person **extremely well-known** to the President of the Council [of Ministers, i.e. Mussolini]...Dumini is a **friend** of Cesare Rossi and others in the government besides Mussolini... **Mussolini knew everything**...Mussolini received the papers and passport of the Honorable Matteotti **to prove his disappearance...**⁷⁵

The publication of the Filippelli memoir was followed the next month

⁷⁴For Modigliani's account, see his *L'assassinio di Giacomo Matteotti*, Rome: Il Vascello, 1945.

⁷⁵The document is reproduced in full in *Non Mollare 1925*, table IX; emphasis in the original.

(March 1925 no. 7) by a similar document concerning the beating death of Giovanni Amendola. Vico Perrone, a member of the MVSN (Movimento Volontario per la Sicurezza Nazionale) wrote on 29 June 1924 of an order received from General De Bono, "Triumvir of the Fascist Revolution," to attack Amendola.⁷⁶ That same month, another issue appeared that printed a letter from Guido Narbona, former vice secretary of the Fascio of Turin dated 24 November 1924, in which he recounts receiving instructions directly from Mussolini to "give Gobetti a severe lesson."⁷⁷ With biting sarcasm, Salvemini commented later "June of 1924 was the month of memoirs. Every fascist...was writing a memoir and consigned it to a friend to serve as a defense. Even Aldo Finzi, the under-secretary of the interior who was forced to resign to direct suspicion away from Mussolini, wrote his memoir...even Dumini..."⁷⁸

Gaetano Salvemini, betrayed by a typographer, was arrested on 8 June 1925, accused of complicity in the publication and diffusion of *Non Mollare!*. Rossi managed to escape to France; the police did not know of Rosselli's participation. In his memoirs, Salvemini recalled that the few weeks spent in prison for this "crime" were "among the best times of my life." The enforced rest was welcomed after months of frenetic clandestine activity. Someone loaned him a copy of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and his cellmate was a young communist

⁷⁶Ibid., table XIII.

⁷⁷Ibid., table VII.

⁷⁸Salvemini, "Il Non Mollare," p. 11.

who whispered to Salvemini as he was about to be transferred to Florence: "Let's hope that in Purgatory the holy soul of Lenin is praying for us." The historian, moved by this sincere display of affection commented: "Where could one find a more beautiful case of religious syncretism? Catholicism perpetuated itself in the communist religion, just as centuries ago, paganism was perpetuated in Christianity."⁷⁹

Salvemini's trial was scheduled for early July, with Ernesto Rossi to be tried *in absentia*. Because of a technicality, the trial was temporarily postponed, and Salvemini was granted provisional freedom, which infuriated the fascists waiting outside the courthouse. The defense team and its supporters were attacked on the streets, as Salvemini managed to make his way to the Rosselli house on via Giusti, where he spent the night. The family gardener, in the pay of the fascists, betrayed the historian and two days later (the 15th) a band of fascists broke into the house. Finding neither Salvemini nor the Rosselli brothers, they proceeded to destroy the furniture (including a priceless sixteenth century table) and Carlo's library.⁸⁰

With Rossi in France and Salvemini in jail, Rosselli still managed to put out two issues of *Non Mollare!*. The paper directly attacked king Victor Emanuele III for his complicity in allowing fascism to come to power. The king had sworn to uphold the *statuto*, yet signed into law those decrees that effectively ended

⁷⁹Gaetano Salvemini, *Memorie di un fuoruscito*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1960, pp. 14-15.

⁸⁰Alessandro Levi, *Ricordi dei fratelli Rosselli*, pp. 79-80.

freedom of the press in Italy. For his role, some sort of public demonstration was necessary: *Non Mollare!* suggested that on the king's visit to Milan on 25-26 April, the workers of the city stage a 15 minute strike, but the leaders in that city preferred no public demonstration against the king. For Victor Emanuele's visit to Florence on 4 May, the order of the day was different: "boycott" the king.

Whoever participates in the visit of the king on 4 May, becomes an accomplice of the fascists. Don't go to the cafes. Don't go to the movie houses. Don't go to the theaters. It is necessary that the public establishments remain deserted that day, as a day of mourning. Don't go to the station when the king arrives and departs. Don't pass through the streets where you know the king will pass. Don't approach the public buildings where you know the king is...It is necessary that the king feel the absolute absence of the people around him...After 4 January 1925, it is no longer possible to distinguish, unfortunately, the king from Mussolini. To applaud the king is to applaud Mussolini.⁸¹

If the antifascists were to boycott the visit of the king, how could they be assured that the rest of Florence would follow their lead? Salvemini contacted the wife of the socialist minister of Belgium, Emile Vandervelde,⁸² who was in Florence as a tourist. "Tomorrow," he said to her, "go to the Piazza Signoria, wait for the king to come out from the ceremony, follow the procession along via Cavour, the Piazza Duomo, and so on until Piazza Cavour. Then come and tell what kind of crowd there is, and what reception they give the king."

At midday, Mrs. Vandervelde returned to Salvemini's house and reported: "From Piazza Signoria to Piazza Cavour, not a single soul. Rows of blackshirts

⁸¹*Non Mollare*, n. 11 April 1925; reproduced in *Non Mollare 1925*, table XXIV.

⁸²Emile Vandervelde (1866-1938) was a Belgian socialist politician who served as president of the Second International and often supported Rosselli and Giustizia e Libertà. See the recent biography by Janet Polasky, *The Democratic Socialism of Emile Vandervelde: Between Reform and Revolution*, Herndon, Va.: Berg Publishers, 1995.

here and there along the street. But behind the blackshirts not a soul, I say not a single soul. Only in the Piazza Duomo a few dozen persons, who were evidently foreign tourists."⁸³

Salvemini's trial began on 13 July. As the proceedings began, he was shocked to see Carlo Rosselli in the courtroom--a tremendous risk. Carlo, in full view of the fascists, went up to his teacher and shook his hand. Salvemini, shaken and worried that Rosselli might be implicated, ordered him to leave. Temporarily freed on a legal technicality, Salvemini decided to flee Italy on 4 August.

During the summer of 1925, *Non Mollare!* continued to publish incriminating documents against the regime. In June, it put together a special commemorative edition in honor of Giacomo Matteotti on the anniversary of his assassination, recounting the numerous pieces of evidence that directly tied Mussolini to the crime.⁸⁴ In July, it republished a letter sent to the *Times* of London challenging Mussolini's claim that freedom of the press was still permitted in Italy: "...our paper is not legal according to fascist laws. It is one of the many clandestine newspapers that have risen in Italy following the suppression of freedom of the press. You have, therefore, in us the living proof of the lies that Mussolini has written to you...Already hundreds of persons have been arrested solely on the basis of possessing one of our newspapers; some have been tried and

⁸³Salvemini, "Il Non Mollare," p. 13.

⁸⁴*Non Mollare* 1925, table XXX.

condemned to two years in prison..."⁸⁵

Rosselli, who was spending three days a week teaching in Genoa, managed to avoid suspicion. The fascists, convinced that the Masons were behind the newspaper, spent considerable time and effort in trying to track down those responsible. In the last week of September and the first days of October, the fascists were given orders of reprisals against the Masons.

Carlo's decision in the fall to publish another document incriminating Mussolini in Matteotti's murder led to a "Saint Bartholomew's Massacre" in Florence and his decision to end publication of *Non Mollare!*. The October 5 edition of the paper carried Cesare Rossi's memoir written on 14 June 1924. "*All that has happened, came about through the direct will and complicity of the Duce.*"⁸⁶ The issue unleashed the full fury of the blackshirts in Florence. Consolo and Pilati were murdered in their homes in front of their families; Becciolini, seeing a group of fascists assaulting the house of a Mason, intervened and killed the squadrista Giovanni Luporini. The young Becciolini was lynched on the spot.⁸⁷ Since the publication of *Non Mollare!* was now putting the lives of innocent people in jeopardy, Rosselli decided to cease publication. Antifascism in Florence was becoming too dangerous. It was time to work in Genoa and Milan.

⁸⁵*Non Mollare 1925*, table XXXV.

⁸⁶*Non Mollare!*, 5 October 1925; reprinted in *Non Mollare 1925*, table XLIII. Emphasis in the original.

⁸⁷Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 59.

Il Quarto Stato

By dividing his time between Florence, Milan and Genoa, Rosselli had managed to avoid the attention of fascist thugs for some time. But an incident in Milan in the spring of 1926 proved that the blackshirts were watching and not completely ignorant of his ideas:

Tuesday I was leaving the Hotel Bavaria at nine when I was approached by three young men. One politely asked me: "may I have a word professor?" I raised my eyes and looked at him. "Yesterday in class you made a statement..." I interrupted him saying that I gave explanations about my scholastic work only at school and made to go on my way. The three jumped me from behind with punches. I defended myself very energetically and with success shouting that they didn't frighten me and landing a punch myself. Two light cudgels don't hold me down!

After half a minute, aware that people were gathering and that things were not going well for them, the three heroes suspended their action while I continued to shout in a loud voice. The three, fearful, said in a low voice that I attacked them!!! In any event, after the scene cleared, I left tranquilly after only receiving one punch without consequence.

At three in the afternoon I gave my lesson. When I entered, about eighty students greeted me with great applause. About fifteen fascists then appeared shouting "viva l'Italia!" and "viva il fascismo!" but they were driven away with force. I made a short and measured speech and began the lesson.⁸⁸

Early in 1926, a project took shape in Rosselli's mind that had roots in the political crisis after Matteotti's assassination and Aventine debacle. The idea was to create a theoretical journal that would address the shortcomings of the socialist party and contribute to a renewal of socialist vitality in Italy. The experience of *Non Mollare!* was extremely important in that it showed the possibility, problems

⁸⁸Letter of 2 April 1926; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 298. For the fascist police version of the event, see the document from the Prefecture of Genoa in ACS, Pubblica Sicurezza 1926, Busta 15, inserto A1. An open letter to Rosselli appeared in the fascist newspaper *Il Littorio* "Sciaffeggio per la seconda volta al Professore Rosselli" on 4 May 1926.

and potential of an underground newspaper and network. But *Non Mollare!* was a popular organ, aimed at the widest possible audience. What Rosselli had in mind now was a more sophisticated journal that would foster debate and dialogue among intellectuals and party leaders. Rosselli was convinced that the younger generation was being lost by the socialists; they were attracted to the idealism of Croce and Gentile or the vitalism of Bergson or the myths of Sorel and even Catholic modernism. Many were drawn to the avant-garde literary and cultural movements as they developed in Milan and Florence.

By 1926 Rosselli was emerging from his own personal crisis. He was beginning to realize that a career as a university professor may have been ideal in another time; but the reality of fascist Italy denied any such luxury to a person of moral conscience. His letters of 1926 hint at a certain impatience with teaching. Instead, he arrived at the conclusion that fighting fascism would demand all of his time, much of his fortune, and perhaps even greater sacrifices. It was in this context that *Il Quarto Stato* was born.⁸⁹

It was not an easy birth. Rosselli travelled to Milan in order to convince Pietro Nenni to collaborate on the new journal. Nenni had first written for *Avanti!* in 1921 and by the next year was appointed the paper's editor. In this position, he blocked the fusion of the Socialist and Communist parties demanded by the Bolsheviks in Russia. He believed instead in a more moderate alliance of

⁸⁹Enrico Bassi, "Contributo alla storia di Quarto Stato," in *Critica Sociale* LII, nn. 16-17, 20 August 1960, pp. 421-22; Arturo Colombo, "Carlo Rosselli e il Quarto Stato," in *Nord e Sud* XXIV, nn. 34-35, November-December 1977, pp. 108-120; and Leo Valiani, "Il Quarto Stato di Nenni e Rosselli," in *Il Corriere della Sera*, 6 June 1977, p. 3.

democrats, reformists and liberal members of the Catholic Popular Party as the most viable alternative to fascism. For his theoretical stance, Nenni was ousted from his position as editor of *Avanti!*.

Rosselli recognized in Nenni some common characteristics: a severe critique of the Aventine Secession, the realization that the struggle against fascism would have to move beyond a purely legalitarian mode, the desire to create a wide antifascist coalition that would include everyone from the maximalists of the Socialist party on the left to the liberals and Catholics on the right and from the proletariat to the artisans and peasants to that minority of the enlightened bourgeoisie. Perhaps most importantly, both Rosselli and Nenni were willing to concede that the victory of fascism meant the defeat of socialism. Both understood that fascism, although it had its roots in Italian history and society, was a new political phenomenon, something not recognized by the older generation of the Left.

Yet they were also very different. Nenni later commented on their differences:

One--Rosselli--was a mystic, a romantic. The other was somewhat of a skeptic. One was an optimist that had a happy youth. The optimism of the other was tempered by that bit of pessimism that flows in the life of a man who has a youth without joy and without bread. One joined the battle with the absolute thirst which is particular to those youths raised with great moral and intellectual qualities. The other came from a very difficult battle, bitter and a little discouraged...One--Rosselli intuited things. The other knew them.⁹⁰

In two important letters, one to Nenni and the other to Tommaso Fiore,

⁹⁰Pietro Nenni, "Lo scampolista," in *Almanacco socialista 1938*, p. 147.

Rosselli outlined his vision of the new journal and its potential. To Fiore he wrote on 11 March 1926 that the new journal would initiate "a work of the revision of the socialist program and ideology, for now remaining, *et pour cause*, fundamentally in the cultural arena." What was necessary, according to Rosselli, was to "redirect socialism in general and Italian socialism in particular, to a contact with reality, both economic and cultural...For too long the movement has drifted along in a state of intellectual paralysis and it is no coincidence that in the last twenty years it has completely lost favor with the best elements of the new generation."⁹¹

Perhaps Rosselli was too harsh in his assessment of the recent history of the Italian Socialist Party; yet the fact that creative and original thinkers such as Gobetti were often to be found outside the Socialist Party--indeed outside any political party--lends force to Rosselli's critique. Rosselli himself, even though a member of Matteotti's reformist Partito Socialista Unitario, was never really active in the party.

Rosselli had first thought of Nenni as a possible colleague after Nenni's open letter of 14 November 1925 to the PSI which warned that "we must prepare ourselves for a very long struggle" and "have the courage to begin from the beginning and with a new spirit."⁹² Rosselli's letter to Nenni was instrumental in getting the former editor of *Avanti!* to join forces for *Il Quarto Stato*. It also

⁹¹The letter is reprinted in *Il Quarto Stato di Nenni e Rosselli*. ed. Domenico Zucàro. Milan: SugarCo, 1977, p. 309-10.

⁹²*Ibid.*, p. 10.

foretold Rosselli's own tragic end:

You spoke to me once and in a moving way of Matteotti; and you told me that it would please you to give your life for an idea, just as he had done; we find ourselves in agreement in lamenting the total absence of a spirit of sacrifice and the thirst for sacrifice among our friends. I also have often dreamed of having so usefully lending my life for such a great cause...it is the decisive hour...I put at the service of the initiative my money, believing that in doing so, I, a socialist and rich capitalist, fulfill a *strict duty* which no one has to acknowledge, because for me it is a liberation...I am young, and wealthy, and do not come from fifteen years of hard and tormented struggle; and I ask myself if I have the right to speak to you, a veteran, a similar language. But I am convinced, today, that I have that right...⁹³

The letter contains some of the ideas that were later to appear in the movement *Giustizia e Libertà*: specifically that the struggle against fascism must be conducted, as much as possible, within Italy itself, and that cultural, political and clandestine work had to be carried out simultaneously.⁹⁴

Nenni, although his relationship with the PSI was strained at the time, felt obligated to ask permission to begin the project with Rosselli. The maximalist leaders of the party granted him authorization and Nenni was free to work on the new journal. On 27 March 1926, the first of thirty issues of *Il Quarto Stato* appeared in Milan. Managing editor of the new journal was Roberto Tremelloni who had previously worked on *La Giustizia* until it was suppressed in 1925 and on the weekly *Battaglie sindacali* of the CGL.⁹⁵ There were no formal rules of association nor statutes; instead, those that worked for and contributed to *Il*

⁹³The letter is conserved in the AGL, sezione I, fascicolo I, sottofascicolo 80, inserto #9.

⁹⁴Garosci, *Vita* I, p. 68.

⁹⁵Tranfaglia, pp. 283-84.

Quarto Stato were all young members of the two socialist parties, maintaining cordial contact with each other and exchanging ideas, information and assistance.

The general tone of the new review was a critique of the positivism still dominant in certain intellectual circles and in the PSI; an attack against what was perceived as a socialism that was too accommodating; an awareness that the victories attained during the Giollitian era were given from above rather than won from below; and that the great ideals and passions of early socialism were not to be subservient to the politics of *trasformismo*. This position of Rosselli and the other "young Turks" of *Il Quarto Stato*, as we shall see, led to a direct confrontation with the old guard of socialism on the editorial staff of Turati's *Critica Sociale*; the defender of the reformists would be Claudio Treves.

Another trait of *Il Quarto Stato* that would also define *Giustizia e Libertà* was its "cosmopolitan" character; in this regard it followed and resembled Gobetti's group around *La Rivoluzione liberale* in Turin. Rosselli was conscious of this similarity. By calling upon the exponents of various political tendencies, Rosselli and Nenni gave *Il Quarto Stato* a lively impetus. From the maximalist wing of the PSI there were Lelio and Antonio Basso, Guido Mazzali and Antonio Valeri; the reformist wing was represented by Giuseppe Saragat, Giuseppe Faravelli, Eugenio Passerini, Libero Lenti, Piero and Paolo Treves, Max Ascoli and Nino Levi. There were liberals and followers of Gobetti and Salvemini like Mario Vinciguerra, Mario Ferrara, Santino Caramella, Tommaso Fiore and Tulio Ascarelli. What they all had in common was a general will to infuse socialism

with a new vitality, an intransigent antifascism, and the desire to create a new coalition on the left that transcended the constraints of political ideology.⁹⁶

The journal defined itself as "a socialist review of political culture" and called for a complete re-visioning of the socialist idea in the light of the fascist victory. The task, according to Rosselli and Nenni, was the political and cultural preparation of the socialist party of the future, with a mass base that would form a coalition with other parties fighting fascism, the monarchy and the Church, to establish a democratic republic in Italy. The battle would have to be fought outside the legal political institutions since fascism permitted no other option.

Rosselli envisioned *Il Quarto Stato* as a medium to diffuse the ideals of a more democratic socialism, one imbued with the vitality of voluntarism and avoiding the cruder aspects of Marxism such as economic determinism and apocalyptic visions of the future. As could be expected, it drew criticism at the time and was not immune from attack even half a century later: the communist Giorgio Amendola declared in a 1976 interview that "now *Il Quarto Stato* is becoming a myth, when at the time only a few hundred copies circulated."⁹⁷ Yet there is evidence that several thousand copies were printed at the height of its activity and it was widely read by the antifascists.

Giovanni Amendola, Giorgio's father, died on 7 April 1926 in Cannes, just as the third number of the journal was being prepared. For Rosselli, the elder

⁹⁶Tranfaglia, p. 285.

⁹⁷Giorgio Amendola, *Intervista sull'antifascismo*, p. 60.

Amendola's death represented "the end of the best man at the worst time, precisely when his admirable qualities could have served us in battle."⁹⁸ In the 10 April edition, Rosselli and Nenni wrote "Amendola" while in the 24 April issue Max Ascoli published a commemorative article on the murdered antifascist leader.

Writing to Tommaso Fiore on 11 March, Rosselli detailed his conception of *Il Quarto Stato*:

The difficulty lies not in finding people disposed to sending an article, but in finding people disposed to working seriously and organically... We will give much space to critical reviews and because of this there will be the possibility to illustrate numerous aspects of the southern agrarian problem... The journal will have the format of Riv. Lib. It will have regular columns of foreign politics and union politics, the regular collaboration of Labriola and Barotono; we will even try a third page of philosophy and literature.⁹⁹

A month later, Rosselli remarked on the difficulty of putting out the journal: "Since we wish, at least for the first issues, to avoid the old men, we are really a lonely bunch... We need patience and compassion. Besides, a newspaper, like a child, is not made in a single day..."¹⁰⁰ Fiore, for his part, agreed to assist the endeavor with articles on the "Southern Question."¹⁰¹

The first edition of *Il Quarto Stato* (27 March 1926) contained Rosselli's article "Il socialismo ha sofferto troppo poco" [Socialism has suffered too little]

⁹⁸Letter of 9 April 1926; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 300.

⁹⁹Letter of 11 March 1926; quoted in Zucàro, pp. 309-310.

¹⁰⁰Letters to Tommaso Fiore, 5 and 15 April 1926; in Zucàro, pp. 312-313.

¹⁰¹Tommaso Fiore to Carlo Rosselli, 15 March 1926; in Zucàro, p. 311.

in which he claimed that the victories gained by socialism in the first decades of the twentieth century, such as universal suffrage, were granted from above by politicians like Giolitti in return for social peace. For socialism to regain the ethical fire that had once been its greatest asset, it must be prepared for even greater sacrifices. Here, the religious component of Rosselli's thought seems evident: victories are only worthy if they are achieved by suffering and sacrifice. As could be expected, the old guard was quick to challenge this heretical analysis of recent socialist history. The same maiden issue contained a book review by Rosselli concerning the workers' movement in Piedmont by a writer whom Rosselli characterized as an "anarchist conservative."¹⁰²

The real polemic though, and one that was to hound *Il Quarto Stato* for its entire existence over the next seven months, was Rosselli's lead editorial of 3 April 1926, "Autocritica."¹⁰³ The article would thrust Rosselli into the forefront of the debate raging on the character of fascism and the failure of the socialist response. It also went even deeper than this important discussion to an analysis of modern Italian history with all its defects and deficiencies. As such, it is at once a work of historical interpretation, cultural analysis and political critique. In the space of a few short pages, Rosselli had shaken the complacency of the older reformists and chartered a new direction for the younger generation of socialists.

¹⁰²"Le battaglie operaie del Piemonte nel libro di un anarchico conservatore," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 27 March 1926.

¹⁰³"Autocritica," *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 3 April 1926; reprinted in *Opere Scelte di Carlo Rosselli* I, pp. 129-32.

This editorial continued and sharpened the heretical nature of Rosselli's critique of Italian socialism, in both its maximalist and reformist strains.

Rosselli opened the editorial by claiming that the true measure of men is taken in times of misfortune and that in defeat the socialist party would give the best proof of its force and vitality. This was not the first nor the last time that Rosselli implied that fascism was almost a blessing in disguise for socialism. Mussolini's movement would force the socialist and workers' movement to regroup and give an accounting of themselves in the face of adversity. What was called for was an examination of conscience, a self-critique that would spare no one and no idea.

Why were we defeated? Here is the fundamental question that we must pose ourselves and that demands an honest answer. The knowledge of the reasons for the defeat is already a first step on the road to victory. He who hides his head under his wing and entrenches himself behind the nonsense [dadà] of "international reaction," or who limits himself simply to consider fascism as the legitimate and necessary child of the capitalist regime, as an inevitable stop along the socialist Calvary, gives proof of having little moral force and of having understood nothing of the lesson of these years.¹⁰⁴

In the space of a single short paragraph Rosselli presented an intellectual indictment against the reformists, the maximalists and the five-year-old PCd'I. Those that flee to the refuge of "pseudomarxist determinism" to justify their passivity and "supine resignation" show that they do not understand the spirit of Marx which is a spirit of combativeness. Centuries of history cannot be canceled by socialist preaching. Like the voluntarist that he was, the answer to the defeat

¹⁰⁴*Opere Scelte di Carlo Rosselli* I, p. 129.

is not to be found "out there" but much closer to home:

The reasons for the defeat are not to be found in the exterior events of the forces that by definition, elude our control, but in ourselves. We are the authors of our good and evil.¹⁰⁵

Rosselli saw Italy as a pre-modern country and the Italian people as still too much a child, or perhaps a victim, of the past. The evolution of capitalism had been erratic and confined only to small areas of the north; hence the idea of creating a mass movement based on Marxist ideology was a case of putting the cart before the horse. The Italian people were politically immature and affected by a "congenital provincialism." Echoing Gobetti he insisted that

Italy is a country in which there was never the great religious struggles that everywhere constitute the great leaven of the liberal regimes and the surest guarantee of the principle of tolerance and of respect of a minimum common denominator of civilization; it is a country in which political liberties conquered in the *Risorgimento* by the work of a restricted bourgeois and patrician elite always remained the patrimony of a few. Unfortunately, the conquest in Italy of that which is correctly called and considered the highest good of the people of western civilization, is not tied to any mass movement capable of filling a mythical and admonishing role. The masses were absent from the battles for independence and political freedoms. Italian freedom is the daughter of transactions, adaptations and tacit accommodations.¹⁰⁶

Since the proletariat did not gain their freedoms through struggle on their own part, but were granted these freedoms "from above," and since "one does not love and defend that which one did not struggle and sacrifice for," it was inevitable that the Italian working classes did not fight to defend itself, its rights and its liberties against fascism. This was in contrast to countries like Britain and

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 130-31.

France where the working classes were the most interested and vigilant in defending the democratic method. In one of his most serious accusations, Rosselli charged that the "supreme values" of the democratic method were, unfortunately, foreign to the conscience of the Italian working class.¹⁰⁷

In the tradition of the socialist critiques of Gaetano Salvemini and Arturo Labriola, Rosselli pointed out one of the most serious errors of Italian socialism: its failure to adapt socialism and the workers' movement to the particular historical, social, cultural and economic conditions in Italy. Instead, the PSI was overwhelmed by the victory of 1900 which only affected the "workers' aristocracy of the North" and did not know how to carry on the struggle after 1900 for the fundamental political liberty of the entire working class which also included artisans and peasants. The result was immobility, and impotence:

[The socialist party] got lost...by a wordy and abstract revolutionism and...degenerated too often into corporativism and the sterility of reformism, unconsciously bartering the supreme values for the classic plate of beans presented by Giolitti. The exercise of the vote, the progressive participation in public life, the parliamentary struggles, acquired the flavor of normal administrative acts.¹⁰⁸

Soon the gradualist and reformist conception of the socialist future came to be seen as something repugnant and alienated many of the best minds in the socialist camp. What socialism had lost was "the sense of the heroic, the spirit of sacrifice, the consciousness of universal values." The socialists were forced to face the possibility that "perhaps this tragedy was necessary so that Italian

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

socialism places moral values once again in a position of honor, it re-adheres to reality and finally gains consciousness of the great political questions."¹⁰⁹

Rosselli's essay sparked a debate within the socialist movement, one based on theoretical and philosophical concerns rather than questions of tactics. As Garosci points out, Rosselli began this polemic from within the socialist movement, he criticized this world *as his own*, he did not disassociate himself from the defeat.¹¹⁰

The most important response to Rosselli's provocative editorial came from Claudio Treves, former editor of *Avanti!* and second only to Turati among the reformist socialists. Under the pseudonym "Rabano Mauro," Treves used the pages of *Critica Sociale* to mount a defense against Rosselli's charges. His "Autocritica o demolizione?" was a trenchant piece that displayed the strengths and weaknesses of the Italian Left. By attacking Rosselli's critique of Italian socialism, Treves was attempting to refute his interpretation of Italian history. The working class was defeated because of a process that it was not able to control, not because of any deficiencies on the part of the intellectual leadership or any underestimation of the political problem. Treves here was betraying the strict determinism that Rosselli felt hindered the socialists from taking action.

Responding to Rosselli's query "Why were we defeated?," Treves replied:

We were defeated within liberalism, within democracy, which although was of "us," was more properly of the bourgeoisie, that of the "national State,"

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 132.

¹¹⁰Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 74.

that of the elites of the *Risorgimento*...An entire front has collapsed--the front of liberal democratic civilization...It was an error of the intellect, not of sentiment to believe that the State would defend ...the legal freedoms of the proletariat along with all the others.¹¹¹

Treves could agree with Rosselli that an important source of the left's inability to act after the first world war was derived from the split between an abstract revolutionary rhetoric and the pragmatic goals of reformism. Rosselli, adapting Salvemini's critique of both the maximalists and the reformists, saw the crisis of Marxism as crippling the power of the Left in Italy after the war. "What is necessary now is to begin from the top, with a new spirit, enriched by the experiences of the past, strengthened by faith that has by now overcome all trials."¹¹²

Rosselli soon answered Treves with "Autocritica, non demolizione" which appeared on 1 May in *Il Quarto Stato*:

I am accused of having discouraged, degraded and slandered the Italian proletariat by proclaiming it unworthy of emancipating itself; of having denied the ethical beauty of the socialist movement after 1900; of dwelling very anti-historically in the critique of a past that was inevitable; of having transformed a "self-critique" [autocritica] into a sterile and unjust "demolition."¹¹³

Rosselli claimed that the rebuke was expected, even welcomed, as it afforded an opportunity to clarify some of the points made in the first essay. It was necessary to acknowledge the (hopefully temporary) defeat of the Left and its

¹¹¹"Rabano Mauro" (Claudio Treves), "Autocritica o demolizione," *Critica Sociale* (XXXVI), 7-15 April 1926, pp. 93-96.

¹¹²"Autocritica," in *Opere Scelte* I, p. 132.

¹¹³"Autocritica, non demolizione," *Il Quarto Stato* (I) 1 May 1926; reprinted in *Opere Scelte* I, p. 133.

causes without resorting to historical interpretations using words like "inevitable," "determined" or "inescapable". Instead, the socialist leadership, according to Rosselli, was engaged in an intricate verbal ballet, "an elegant dialectical game" which arrived at the comfortable conclusion that in reality, there has been no defeat at all.

Defending one of his more inflammatory statements (That "fascism may have been necessary"), Rosselli restated his line of thinking:

When I affirmed that perhaps this tragedy was necessary so that Italian socialism would place moral values again in a position of honor; it would return to reality and finally gain some notion of the big political questions, I wanted to recognize the undeniable didactic value of fascism which has revealed to the Italians the real substratum of Italian life, which has again raised...fundamental problems that we cannot ignore...it is nothing if not the logical continuation of the "ancien régime" ...¹¹⁴

Here, the influence of Gobetti and Salvemini is clear; fascism was not a "parenthesis" in Italian history, but the manifestation of deep rooted institutional deficiencies in Italian society. At the same time, although a "continuation of the old regime," Rosselli insisted that it was something new, a political hybrid that demanded a new type of opposition. And given the particular configuration of circumstances in Italy, the historical context, the evolution of economic development, the ethical, political and cultural deficiencies, some of which were the responsibility of the socialist movement, but much of which was beyond its control, the workers' movement has to adapt its ideology to these conditions. Socialist ideology as it has developed in the early twentieth century followed the

¹¹⁴Ibid.

pattern of German Social Democracy and therefore appealed only to the "workers' aristocracy" of northern Italy.¹¹⁵

The crisis of Italian socialism can be traced back to the decade before the first world war, especially 1908 when the debate between Labriola, Turati, Salvemini and Modigliani came to a head. Parliamentary action could be seen in hindsight as both the "greatest claim to glory of the movement but also its Achilles' heel."¹¹⁶

In closing his essay, Rosselli denied the pessimism attributed to him by Treves. History, Rosselli wrote, teaches that there has never been a people that did not pass through some defining crisis such as the one the Italians were now confronting. "Our conscience warns us that the road toward spiritual, political and economic autonomy cannot not be (I would say it must be) seeded with obstacles, defeats and suffering".¹¹⁷

The polemic between Rosselli and Treves drew others into the fray as well. Max Ascoli, Giuseppe Saragat and Pietro Nenni continued the debate into the summer of 1926.¹¹⁸ In truth, the project of an "autocritica" would be continued by Rosselli in exile through his book *Socialismo liberale*, and the

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 139.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 140.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Besides the essays of Rosselli and Treves, see also Alcuino, "Autocritica per ricostruire," *Critica Sociale* (XXXVI), 16-31 May 1926; Observer, Max Ascoli and Franz Weiss, "Polemica sull'autocritica socialista," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 15 May 1926; Roberto Rigola, Giuseppe Saragat and Observer, "Ancora polemica sull'autocritica socialista," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 22 May 1926; Pietro Nenni, "La nuova fase," *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 12 June 1926.

publications of *Giustizia e Libertà*. The fierce debate though, did not sever Rosselli's close ties with the leadership of the reformists. In a letter he reported that "My cordial polemic with Rabano continues and develops with new contributions from the two sides. Today Turati told me that the next issue of *Critica* will be largely devoted to *Quarto Stato*...Here [Milan] I see Modigliani in passing and last night to dinner with Treves. As you see, the polemics do not disturb my relationship with him."¹¹⁹

Another topic that Rosselli tackled in *Il Quarto Stato* was the fierce debate between the free-trade advocates and their critics. In the first issue (27 March 1926), he published a review of Giuseppe Prato's defense of economic liberalism. Prato, a colleague of Einaudi's at the University of Turin, was a supporter of Mussolini's regime. Several months later the topic was again taken up by Rosselli and *Il Quarto Stato* with a piece by Edoardo Giretti defending free trade and a response by Rosselli that questioned how free trade could be tied to the emancipation of the masses; how could economic liberalism approach the masses without understanding their ideals and aspirations?¹²⁰

Other economic writings included a two part essay "Il problema monetario" in which Rosselli lamented the ignorance of economics on the part of most socialist leaders in Italy and their insistence on a crass form of economic

¹¹⁹Letter of 16 May 1926; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 303-304.

¹²⁰Carlo Rosselli, "Le battaglie operaie del Piemonte nel libro di un anarchico conservatore," *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 27 March 1926; "Il nostro liberismo," *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 16 October 1926.

determinism.¹²¹ He suggested that a book could be written with the title *On the Function of Ignorance in Economic Life*, and insisted that a study of financial policy would reveal the source of many of the "pathological phenomena of the capitalist world" such as unemployment, business cycles, crises, etc.

Yet the pandora's box that had been opened with Rosselli's two "Autocritica" essays could not be closed. During the summer and autumn of 1926, *Il Quarto Stato* returned again and again to the crisis of the socialist party and Rosselli was forced to address the question several more times. In "Volontarismo," Rosselli posed what he called the "imperious dilemma": either the victory of fascism was due, at least partially, to the failures of socialism or it must be admitted that the actions of the socialists had no bearing on Italian society. If the first were true, then it was necessary to examine the errors and act accordingly; if the second were true, the best course of action was to passively wait for the collapse of fascism. "Rabano Mauro [Treves] and others that share his thought, even so nobly expressed, seem to me to hold the second part of this dilemma which leads to the most discouraging of fatalisms and the most rigid of determinisms."¹²²

Rosselli claimed that he had no desire to enter the lofty realms of philosophy ("fortunately, it is not a question of positivism nor idealism"), but rather of action. His conception of voluntarism is essentially a form of humanism:

¹²¹"Il problema monetario," *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 24 April 1926 and 22 May 1926.

¹²²"Volontarismo," *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 12 June 1926; now in *Opere Scelte* I, p. 145.

faith in oneself, in the goodness of one's ideas, in the potential force of the movement in which one participates, in the program that one intends to realize to forcefully influence the environment upon which one wishes to operate...Fascism has created a situation where we are reduced to hoping only in ourselves, and we reject the deterministic interpretation of the past because it precludes us from the future, inducing a melancholy and resigned impotence, worthy only of the defeated that stoically want to limit themselves to a profession of faith suspended in the void of ideas.¹²³

Arguing against the pessimism that was endemic on the Left after 1922, Rosselli would insist that pessimism had to be combatted with voluntarism, that is, with action. The Aventine Secession was the nadir of antifascist pessimism. It was based on moral outrage, but incapable of action and this was symptomatic of the disease of pessimism. Perhaps the Aventine could have been supported in its early stages, but not after 3 January 1925 when the true nature and character of fascism was fully revealed. What was required after 3 January was action, the force of will, the audacious gesture that gave the lie to fascism's claim of universal obedience and consent.¹²⁴

Since Rosselli and Nenni felt their position was not fully understood, they devoted the eighteenth issue to a long editorial, "Chiarificazione." To begin with, the two wanted to put to rest any idea that the group around *Il Quarto Stato* was the nucleus of a future political party; their aim was more modest: to assist the socialist movement in freeing itself from the crisis in which it had been floundering since the failure of the Aventine Secession. The program of *Il Quarto Stato* could be reduced to four essential points: 1) their position concerning

¹²³Ibid., pp. 146-47.

¹²⁴"Contro il pessimismo," *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 26 June 1926; in *Opere Scelte* I, pp. 155-160.

fascism; 2) their ideas on the political struggle; 3) the institutional problem; and 4) the question of socialist unity.¹²⁵

Fascism, contrary to those who saw it as a transitory phenomenon or those who, in their pessimism saw it as identical with the Italian character, was a much more complex problem. It could not simply be condemned as the last phase of capitalism and the mechanical reaction of the bourgeoisie. Italy's recent unification, the political inexperience of the masses, overpopulation, the lack of a true democratic tradition, the socialists' mistake of ignoring the larger political questions in attempting to achieve what they saw as their essential function: that of lifting the working class from poverty with better salaries.

The method of the political struggle for *Il Quarto Stato* was the democratic method, both as a tool and as a goal. Democratic principles such as popular sovereignty, a representative government, the respect for the rights of minorities, freedom of the press and organization, are at the basis of the political struggle in the more socially and politically advanced countries of Europe such as England, France, Belgium and Germany. Democracy, both as a method and a principle, was the fruit of the revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

When we speak of socialist democracy, we mean by the word "democracy" something very different from the meaning used by the bourgeois parties. For us, political democracy is not real democracy, only the instrument to attain it. Real democracy means not only political autonomy, but also and above all economic freedom. A true democracy does not exist where there exists profound economic disparity.¹²⁶

¹²⁵"Chiarificazione," *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 24 July 1926.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*

Even the rule of the majority and popular sovereignty, in itself "sacrosanct," acquires a purely formal value when a minority holds the instruments of power for itself. Even universal suffrage, when it is accompanied by poverty, is not substantial, but only formal democracy.

On the "institutional question," there could be no doubt that a socialist democracy could only be a republic. The problem arose when the socialists postponed the institutional question, which was in reality the overthrow of the monarchy, in favor of focusing attention on gaining better economic conditions for the working class. Those socialists who proposed that the institutional question be postponed until after the fall of fascism were mistaken; Victor Emmanuel III had by 1926 inextricably linked the House of Savoy with the fate of fascism. To believe that fascism came to power against the will of the king is "a fable of deluded monarchists."

The socialist schism was an historical error, and a conscious betrayal of the obligations toward the working classes. The socialists had forgotten that their task was to unite the workers, especially in moments of crisis. Strengthened by this essential principle, the socialist movement grew over decades. Tragically, the socialist schism did not end ideological disputes; if anything, philosophical hair-splitting continued in both the reformist PSU and the maximalist PSI. What Rosselli and Nenni proposed was that the dissension between the two socialist camps was less grave than appeared at first sight, that the disagreements were over situations that by now had ceased to exist and that they had more in common

than that which separated them.

The final exhortation had all the character of a categorical imperative:

What is important is to escape from the present state of paralysis and to be present, not as passive hostages of our adversaries, but as a fully efficient opposition. The first condition of victory is to want victory...Therefore friends, let us discuss, ponder, fight if we must. But let's hurry. The time is pressing and we cannot avoid indefinitely our grave duties.¹²⁷

During the final month of publication, Rosselli and *Il Quarto Stato* returned to the question of socialist unity. Matteotti's PSU, founded in October 1922, had been dissolved by fascist decree. It was reborn as the Partito Socialista Dei Lavoratori Italiani (PSLI--the Socialist Party of Italian Workers) which continued the program of the earlier reformist PSU; i.e. gradualist and democratic as opposed to the revolutionary tactics of the PSI. Turati, Treves and Saragat favored unification with the PSI on the condition that a reunified PSI adhere to the Socialist rather than the Communist International.¹²⁸

Rosselli remained cool to the debate raging on reunification. What was more important than resolving obscure theoretical points was to initiate action and organize the workers against fascism. He supported the PSLI, describing it as the only party, with the exception of the Italian Republican Party, that was characterized by initiative, showed some signs of attracting young members, and engaged in the task of re-examining its position in the light of recent history. Yet he was careful not to fall into the trap of sectarianism, the congenital weakness

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Alexander DeGrand, *The Italian Left in the Twentieth Century*, p. 63.

of the Italian Left: "We do not make a fetish of the party," he once wrote, "we are sensible enough to understand that labels will not triumph, but works...."¹²⁹

After the PSLI Congress met in October 1926, an editorial appeared in the last issue of *Il Quarto Stato* (30 October) signed "Noi" and probably a collaborative effort between Rosselli and Nenni. The motions approved by the congress were greeted with favor by the journal, as they addressed the institutional question and called for a broad antifascist front of the "manual and intellectual proletariat."¹³⁰ The congress also reiterated its position on the rise of fascism and the character of Mussolini's regime, rejecting the communist theory as too simplistic. It also took an important step in defining antifascism in a positive sense--what it was for--as well as in a negative sense--what it was against. This was an important step forward and one that Rosselli would insist on in the future.

Il Quarto Stato was destined for a short life of only seven months. The day after the thirtieth edition appeared, 30 October 1926, there was another attempt on the life of Mussolini by a fourteen-year-old boy from Bologna, Anteo Zamboni. Zamboni was lynched on the spot, but there seems to be some suspicion as to whether there really was an attempt on the life of Il Duce, or whether it was an elaborate mise-en-scène in order to justify what soon followed. Fascist reprisals

¹²⁹"Un congresso e i suoi problemi," *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 9 October 1926; in *Opere Scelte* I, pp. 167-171.

¹³⁰"Il Congresso del PSLI," *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 30 October 1926; now in *Opere Scelte* I, pp. 172-178.

were swift and severe. The street gangs that had been contained by Mussolini were unleashed in a reign of terror. The houses of Treves, Nenni and Modigliani, among others were destroyed. The attempted assassination eventually led to the passing of the Exceptional Laws of 11 November 1926 which effectively began the period of totalitarianism in Italy. In early November, with the help of Rosselli and Ferruccio Parri, Nenni fled to France, and the phenomenon of *fuoruscitismo* began.¹³¹

What had *Il Quarto Stato* accomplished in its short lifespan? Most observers, then and now, agree that the journal formed part of the conscience of antifascism in Italy and represented one of the first sustained attempts to forge an antifascist consensus among intellectuals. It addressed problems, questions and ideas that were to be formulated in greater depth and complexity in exile and served to plant the seeds of a positive antifascism by arguing for a republic. One scholar has written that "in the experience of *Il Quarto Stato*, the socialist thought of our country matured."¹³² In a very real sense, *Il Quarto Stato* also continued the legacy of Gobetti in insisting that fascism was not an ephemeral phenomenon, noting the ties between fascism and the recent past. As a "socialist review of

¹³¹On the phenomenon of *fuoruscitismo*, see Aldo Garosci, *Storia dei fuorusciti*, Bari: Laterza, 1953; Paolo Alatri, *L'antifascismo italiano*, 2 vols. Rome: Riuniti, 1973; Gaetano Arfè, et. al. *L'emigrazione socialista nella lotta contro il fascismo, 1926-1939*, Florence, Sansoni, 1982; Charles F. Delzell, "Il fuoruscitismo italiano dal 1922 al 1943," in *Movimento di Liberazione in Italia* V, n. 23, March 1953, pp. 3-37; *Italia in esilio: L'emigrazione italiana in Francia tra le due guerre*, Rome: Presidente del Consiglio, 1993; Marina Tesoro and Elisa Signori, *Antifascismo in esilio: fra repubblicanismo e socialismo*, Florence: Le Monnier, 1987.

¹³²Paolo Bagnoli, "La battaglia socialista de Il Quarto Stato," in *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, p. 113.

political culture" it became a model for other publications by antifascists in Italy and in exile. It stressed that the forces of the Left had more in common than they realized and placed united political action above ideological consistency. For Rosselli it was his most sincere, and last, attempt to reconcile himself with traditional socialism. At the same time, in articles like "Autocritica," there is the *heretical* Rosselli of *Socialismo liberale*.¹³³ Garosci sees *Il Quarto Stato* as the first elaboration of the general ideas of antifascism that were later to develop in the Concentrazione Antifascista and Giustizia e Libertà. Others agree that the project represented a rebirth of socialism after defeat, the beginning of a return through a new mentality that rejected the Aventine Secession and legalitarian methods. By 1926, both Rosselli and Nenni believed in the necessity of forming revolutionary antifascist militias that would spearhead the clandestine struggle against the regime and use violence. One interpretation of *Il Quarto Stato* sees it as a form of Italian social democracy while another believes it was merely a continuation of the old reformism, almost a youthful version of *Critica Sociale*.¹³⁴ The communists of the time criticized the journal for its "bourgeois prejudice," but Rosselli would continue to insist that an effective antifascist coalition would have to forge an alliance among the industrial workers, the artisans, the peasants and the advanced segments of the bourgeoisie, especially the intellectuals.

¹³³Aldo Garosci, "Il Quarto Stato," in *Giustizia e Libertà*, 10 June 1938.

¹³⁴S. Merli, "Il Quarto Stato di Nenni e Rosselli e la polemica sul rinnovamento socialista in 1926," *Rivista Storica del Socialismo* III, n. 16, September-December 1960, pp. 819-28.

In the field of culture, it sought to publish works that would stimulate debate and discussion on the Left. In October, it announced the publication of three books: Arturo Labriola's *L'attualità di Marx*; Pietro Nenni's *Storia di quattro anni 1919-1922*; and Rudolf Hilferding's *Il capitale finanziario*. With the Exceptional Laws though, the fascists destroyed the books published by the Casa Editrice Libreria Il Quarto Stato.¹³⁵

Turati's Escape

The attempt by Anteo Zamboni to assassinate Mussolini on 31 October 1926 was met with savage and brutal reprisals on the part of the regime. The Exceptional Decrees effectively killed any last vestiges of freedom in Italy and the press was permanently muzzled. Most scholars point to 1926 and the Exceptional Decrees as the creation of the fascist dictatorship; indeed, Mussolini referred to 1926 as his "Napoleonic Year." On 5 November all political parties except the PNF were dissolved. All antifascist organizations were outlawed and antifascist newspapers confiscated and suppressed. Four days later, the fascist majority in the Chamber of Deputies declared the seats of the 120 antifascist deputies who had participated in the Aventine Secession annulled¹³⁶ and Mussolini presented the Chamber of Deputies with a bill creating the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State. The Chamber passed the bill on the spot and the Senate followed suit

¹³⁵*Il Quarto Stato di Nenni e Rosselli*, Domenico Zucàro, ed. p. 36.

¹³⁶Except for those of the PCd'I who had returned to the Chamber.

on 20 November. The Tribunal actually began operating in February 1927 and continued until 1943. It held a total of 720 sessions in which 5,319 persons were tried. Of these 5,155 were found guilty and sentenced, of whom 29 were executed and 7 given life sentences. Antonio Gramsci, notwithstanding his parliamentary immunity, was arrested, tried and sentenced to a long prison term. At his trial, the prosecutor declared "We must prevent this mind from working for the next twenty years." Ironically, Gramsci's prison sentence and forced withdrawal from the daily political struggle allowed him to create his enormously influential prison notebooks which are today regarded as the most original re-working of Western Marxism.¹³⁷

In addition to these measures, passports were canceled and the regime began to use the practice of *confino* for political "criminals." *Confino* was the practice of forcing political opponents into "domestic exile:" most were sent to tiny villages in the interior of the south. Carlo Levi, perhaps the most famous of these prisoners and a member of Giustizia e Libertà in Turin, used this experience for his most powerful book, *Christ Stopped at Eboli*.¹³⁸ Carlo Rosselli, as we shall see, also used his time in *confino* to write his most important theoretical work.

¹³⁷*Selections From the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. edited and translated by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971. See also *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 1, edited and with an introduction by Joseph Buttigieg, New York: Columbia University press, 1994.

¹³⁸Carlo Levi, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*. Turin: Einaudi, 1945. Printed in English as *Christ Stopped At Eboli*. trans. Frances Frenaye. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1947.

The violent blackshirt squads, held in check by Mussolini during the Matteotti crisis and its aftermath, were unleashed in all their fury. Many of the cities and provinces were again in the grip of terror. Filippo Turati was a virtual prisoner in his apartment in the Piazza Duomo of Milan. The death of his companion Anna Kuliscioff in December of 1925 had provoked a period of severe depression in the reformist leader. To make matters worse, his own health was deteriorating and he seemed to have given up all sense of struggle, seeing a lifetime of work destroyed in a few short years. Outside his window, in the piazza of the great Gothic cathedral of Milan, fascist blackshirts paraded and chanted "*Con la barba di Turati facciamo per lustrare gli stivali di Mussolini*" ["With the beard of Turati we will shine the boots of Mussolini"]. It was in this atmosphere of fear and intimidation that Rosselli decided upon Turati's escape from Italy.¹³⁹

Encouraged by the successful escapes of Claudio Treves and Giuseppe Saragat in the days after the Zamboni assassination attempt, Rosselli tried to convince Turati to flee to France. The old warrior was weary and reluctant to undertake the dangerous risk. In the end, it was Rosselli's eloquence and insistence that finally convinced Turati that his life was in danger and that the battle could be continued abroad. On the morning of 21 November, Rosselli had a "drammatico colloquio" with Turati; "If Anna were here...", began Carlo,

¹³⁹For Rosselli's account of how he convinced Turati to flee and their subsequent flight, see his "Come Turati lasciò l'Italia," originally published in *La Libertà*, 14 April 1932; now in Carlo Rosselli, *Scritti politici e autobiografici*, Naples: Polis, 1944; pp. 17-27. A German translation appeared as "Turatis Flucht aus Italien," in *Lübecker Volksbote*, 26 April 1932. The original manuscript is in the AGL, sezione I, fascicolo 2, sottofascicolo 2, inserto 17.

hoping to inspire Turati; but the old man interrupted Rosselli to reply sadly, "Oh, let's not permit the dead to speak."¹⁴⁰ In the afternoon, Alessandro Levi brought Turati a letter from Treves which told of the latter's escape to Paris.¹⁴¹ That night with the help of several accomplices, Rosselli ushered Turati out of his apartment under the not-so-watchful eyes of the fascist police. An elegant couple with a dog on a leash managed to distract the police watching the apartment while Turati, clean shaven and bundled up in a great coat and large hat, left by another door. From that moment, Rosselli had consciously taken an irreversible step and placed himself outside the laws of fascist Italy.

Turati and Rosselli were fortunate in that the police did not realize something was amiss until two days later. In the meantime, they fled by automobile to the villa of Giuseppe Albini, drama critic of *Avanti!* whom Rosselli described as "a ferocious and very intelligent critic." Later, sharing time in prison together, Rosselli commented on Albini's character:

Albini is 58 years old, but is proud to carry himself as a young man... Prison has meant one thing for Albini: read. He reads with greed, in monstrous rations. His main dishes: Diderot, Voltaire. After liquidating 400 pages a day, Albini walks with me among the cots. At night he sleeps like a two-year-old baby...he would be happy to spend his prison time in a library.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰Carlo Rosselli, "Come Turati lasciò Italia," in *La Libertà*, 14 April 1932; now in *Scritti politici e autobiografici*. Naples: Polis Editrice, 1944, pp. 19-20. See also his "Turati e il socialismo italiano," in *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 3, June 1932, pp. 1-42; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 85-133.

¹⁴¹Alessandro Levi, *Ricordi dei fratelli Rosselli*, p. 94.

¹⁴²Carlo Rosselli, "Fuga in quattro tempi," in *Almanacco socialista 1931*, Paris: Partito Socialista Italiano, s.d. (but 1930), pp. 76-89. Also in *Scritti politici e autobiografici*, pp. 33-54 and *Opere scelte*, vol. I, pp. 511-25.

In a sense, they were the victims of past success; because Nenni, Treves, Salvemini, Saragat and others had managed to escape to France over the Alps, the roads were now closed and the mountain passes guarded by the fascist police. Another route would have to be found. Once the police discovered Turati's escape, they began a massive search of the homes of all his friends, relatives, and associates. Some, terrorized by the police, surrendered information. Turati's doctor went to Marion Cave Rosselli and told her that by now the police "knew everything."¹⁴³ It was only a matter of time before Albini's villa would be paid an unwelcome visit.

Garosci recounts the story of a marriage that had been put off for some time was agreed to if the groom (who owned an automobile) would agree to bring Turati and Rosselli to the coast. Although never confirmed by Rosselli or Turati, the anecdote illustrates the romantic and adventurous--though still deadly serious--nature of the enterprise. Turati and Rosselli finally left Albini's villa and the area of Milan by car on December 2 only a few hours before the fascist police arrived. Albini willingly served a prison term of eight months for his role in Turati's escape.

As the police concentrated their efforts on the Milan area and the mountain passes into France, Turati and Rosselli made their way south to the Ligurian coast. They spent a night hiding in a local hotel, signing in as father and son.

They were assisted in their efforts by the young socialist lawyer, Sandro

¹⁴³Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 100.

Pertini.¹⁴⁴ Their destination was Savona, a small port city just west of Genoa. From there, the trio rented a motorboat to reach French shores, but this proved too small to make the crossing to Corsica. Another, larger boat--the Oriens--was found, paid for by Rosselli, along with a sailor willing to take the risk, Italo Oxilia. Finally, on 12 December at eight o'clock in the evening, Turati, Rosselli, Parri, Oxilia, Pertini, Da Bove (a naval mechanic and friend of Rosselli) and Boyancé were ready for the last leg of their adventure. Rosselli recounted their departure:

The weather, beautiful during the day of waiting, changed suddenly with a southwest wind. We were all hidden behind the rocks, on the edge of the street near the abandoned pier. I still hear the heavy breath of Turati, face down on the grass. From time to time the headlights of a car force us to hold our breath and lower our heads. Parri inspects the coast. Nothing. The wind doubles in force and the waves crash with great spray on the wharf. At the meeting place, instead of the boat, we find a sailboat guarded by a customs agent.

We are already on our feet, ready to return home when the noise of an automobile throws us to the ground. The car slows down and stops. A pounding of the heart. We have been betrayed. The figure of Oxilia appears. With a panting voice he invites us to climb into the car. "We cannot leave from here, we will depart from Pesce Vivi" (a tavern on the margins of the port of Savona). Carried to Pesce Vivi, we climb down, and embark a few feet from the agents. Sharp commands and the boat moves. A fisherman shouts to us "Good fishing!".

The large fish has broken the net and runs toward the high sea. Pertini intones the *Internazionale*, while we watch the lights of Italy disappear...¹⁴⁵

The trip took over twelve hours on the rough, open sea. Turati wrote of their flight:

With a diabolical sea and waves that filled the very small motorboat, with a sky lacking stars and a broken compass, we sailed for a long time without being certain of our course, sometimes suspecting that we would land either on the

¹⁴⁴Gianni Bisiach, *Pertini racconta: gli anni 1915-1945*, Milan: Mondadori, 1983.

¹⁴⁵"Come Turati lasciò Italia," in *Scritti politici e autobiografici*, pp. 23-24.

archipelago of Tuscany or Spain, or even in Sardegna.¹⁴⁶

Finally, with the light of day, the group arrived at Calvi, on the northwest coast of Corsica. News soon spread through the small town and representatives of the local republican club were on the shore to welcome the old man fleeing from fascist Italy. Turati, who had become seasick through the voyage, somehow managed to overcome his illness and improvised a short and dignified speech in French on the spot for the local republican organization, which had gathered to greet the new exile. As Rosselli recounted, he did not fail them:

Turati rose. The old man is miraculous. He responds in perfect French, improvising one of those talks in which he was a master. He describes Italy in chains, speaks of the struggle for liberty, salutes the free soil of France...The weariness, the crossing, the sea-sickness, all is forgotten...¹⁴⁷

The next day, while Turati and Pertini made their way to Marseilles and in spite of their exhortations, Rosselli and Parri decided to return to Italy. Rosselli firmly believed that the antifascist struggle had to take place within Italy, as far as was possible. If it was absolutely necessary, as in the cases of Salvemini, Turati and others, the older leaders could continue the battle in exile, while the younger followers, not as well known to the police, would continue the struggle in Italy. They reached Marina di Carrara on 14 December and were immediately arrested. Alessandro Levi recounts a visit to Rosselli in prison:

...Carlo was cheerful, he seemed proud to carry the handcuffs, and with his head held high...had an air of challenge and irony...one day Anna Kuliscioff had said in his presence that modern youth were afraid to go to prison. Those

¹⁴⁶Filippo Turati, in *Avanti!*, 15 August 1927.

¹⁴⁷"Come Turati lasciò Italia," pp. 25-26; also Levi, *Ricordo dei fratelli Rosselli*, p. 97.

words of Kuliscioff, which seemed to Carlo in those dark times like "a ray of sunlight" were not a reproach to him. But the words of that very noble woman, who because of her ideals had suffered prison many times and in different countries, sounded like a criticism and an admonishment in the ears of Carlo Rosselli. In that gloomy December of 1926 he began to demonstrate that he did not have that fear, but he knew how to confront the sufferings and the material privations with cheerful courage.¹⁴⁸

Rosselli and Parri were celebrated for their courageous action, but some criticized them for their return and almost certain arrest. In strictly rational terms, perhaps these criticisms were valid; but the expatriation of Turati should not be seen under the strict calculus of rationality. It was an heroic attempt, a clamorous and defiant gesture to challenge the power of the fascist state, an endeavor to demonstrate that there were those in Italy who would not allow themselves to be denied liberty and freedom. The entire episode, and Rosselli's account of it years later, emphasized this romantic aspect of the entire operation.

Turati, leaving Milan and Italy, intuited that the voyage would be of no return, he had a presentiment that Death would seize him in exile like so many great Italians who because of a too great a love for Italy were forced to flee the usurped land...¹⁴⁹

Ferruccio Parri would recall that "The escape of Turati was a masterpiece of audacity and simple astuteness of Rosselli."¹⁵⁰

Upon their arrest, Rosselli and Parri were transported to the local prison

¹⁴⁸Levi, *Ricordi dei fratelli Rosselli*, p. 99.

¹⁴⁹"Come Turati lasciò Italia," in *Scritti politici e autobiografici*, pp. 25-26; see also Enzo Tagliacozzo, "L'evasione di Turati," in *No al fascismo*, ed. Ernesto Rossi. Bari: Laterza, 1957, pp. 49-70; and Alessandro Schiavi, *Esilio e morte di Filippo Turati, 1926-1932*, Rome: Opere Nuove, 1956, pp. 294-97.

¹⁵⁰Ferruccio Parri, in *L'Umanità*, 9 October 1948.

at Massa. They used their time to prepare a defence, knowing full well that Turati's escape had become common knowledge throughout Italy. After a week in prison at Massa, Carlo was transferred to the San Vittore prison in Milan, and from there to Como. Marion Cave Rosselli was expecting their first child at this time, and rode in the same train as Carlo, in a different car. The police escort was kind enough to allow, contrary to regulations, husband and wife a few moments together (in their presence and with Carlo still in chains).¹⁵¹

After three months of prison in Como, Carlo was sent to Savona where Parri was also being held. Italian law at the time stipulated that those accused of "non-authorized ex-patriation" had the right to provisional freedom while awaiting trial. The judicial authorities granted this privilege, but the fascist police sent all those accused to confinement on the island of Ustica, off the coast of Sicily. The train ride from Como in the north to Palermo in the south, shackled hand and foot all the way in the middle of a ferociously hot summer was described by Rosselli, as well as the Dantesque inferno of the notorious Ucciardone prison in Palermo:

Confusion and filth reign everywhere...After a while this promiscuity becomes a torture. Sudden quarrels, noisy dreams, subdued conversations, noises of every sort and nature--much nature--become confused.

The prison slowly goes to sleep.

The last bells sound...

The sounds of outside life, of the other life, that which we call "normal," reach us. I was in Palermo seven years ago as a tourist, exactly in this month of May. Who knows how many times I passed the doors of Ucciardone without thinking.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹Gaetano Salvemini, *Carlo and Nello Rosselli: A Memoir*. London: For Intellectual Liberty, 1937, p. 13.

¹⁵²"Fuga in quattro tempi," in *Scritti politici e autobiografici*, pp. 33-34.

CHAPTER IV

LIBERAL SOCIALISM

Liberty is the possibility of doubting, the possibility of making a mistake, the possibility of searching and experimenting, the possibility of saying "No" to any authority--literary, artistic, philosophic, religious, social, and even political.

Ignazio Silone
The God That Failed (1949)

...is it possible to describe a politics as rational if it does not put the idea of justice above all else?

Carlo Rosselli
Socialismo liberale (1930)

Rosselli and Parri were detained at Massa prison for about ten days,¹ until December 22; notice of their arrest arrived in Florence just as the family was preparing for the marriage of Nello to Maria Tedesco precisely on the 22 of December. Curiously, Rosselli and Parri were not yet connected to the flight of

¹For Parri's account, see "Con Carlo Rosselli dalla fuga di Turati al processo di Savona," in *Non Mollare*, 8 June 1947.

Turati; instead they were held on the suspicion of assisting the escape of the journalists Carlo Silvestri, Giovanni Ansaldo and Riccardo Bauer who were arrested in Como. Although Rosselli was not involved in Silvestri's attempted flight, he did know the journalist. It was from Silvestri that Carlo adopted the idea of a political and popular form of journalism that would reach the vast masses of readers who could not approach nor profit from the elaborate and highly philosophical political literature that was common in most of the contemporary journals. Ansaldo, from the famous steel manufacturing family of Genoa, had begun his journalistic career on the Left, collaborating with Gobetti in Turin on *Rivoluzione liberale*. Rosselli and Parri shared their Como prison term with both Silvestri and Ansaldo until May when the authorities finally realized that the first two were not involved in the Como affair, but were responsible for Turati's escape. With bitter irony, both Silvestri and Ansaldo became fascists, and Ansaldo even rose to some prominence as an editor of Ciano's newspaper *Il Telegrafo* in Livorno.² Almost a decade later, when Ansaldo had become a rising star in the fascist firmament, Rosselli recalled his experience in a short article "Osceno Ansaldo:"

Even though he had opportunity to read as much and whatever he wished, he was depressed, pessimistic, at times desperate. "I'll never concern myself with politics again," he used to say, "I'll never do journalism again. My wish is to return to Genoa, among my books, to study and write. As for Italy--there's

²Ansaldo became a well-known radio commentator for the regime and supported the coup against Mussolini in 1943. For that, the Nazis imprisoned him in Germany and after the war he served a short prison term in Italy. In 1950, he became editor of *Il Mattino* of Naples. His vicious memoirs have recently been published as *L'antifascista riluttante. Memorie del carcere e del confino*. ed. M. Staglieno. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992.

nothing to be done. Italy is finished. The Bourbons were right, Metternich was right. "...His letters were a cry on the ruin of Italy. We--Bauer, Silvestri, Parri and others--while not denying the gravity of the situation, maintained faith in the country, we were for him the insane, the dreamers. He was the wise sage.³

While absolved from the Como affair, Rosselli was sent to Ustica, considered at the time, and with good reason, to be the worst of the islands of *confino*. To travel from Como to Ustica, one must traverse the entire peninsula, and along the way two curious incidents point to the paradoxical nature of Italy in the years of fascism. Passing through Florence, the *carabinieri* who were accompanying Rosselli allowed him to spend the night in his boyhood home on via Giusti. Carlo passed the night with his family as the two *carabinieri* waited discreetly in the courtyard below. Occasionally, they would raise their voices to inquire whether the prisoner was still there, and Carlo would simply lean out the window and reassure his captors that all was well. The next morning, all three boarded another train for Rome where Rosselli was met at the station by his uncle Gabriele Pincherle, brother of Amelia, senator and counselor of State.

Weeks earlier, at the Milan train station, Rosselli had been met by a colonel of the *carabinieri*, known by a mutual friend, who suggested draping Turati's great overcoat over Rosselli's handcuffed wrists in the station. The good colonel thought that surely Rosselli, of a respectable bourgeois family, would not want to be seen in the very public Milan train station shackled like a common criminal; yet Rosselli waved him away, anxious that the people would see how

³"Osceno Ansaldo," *Giustizia e Libertà*, 20 September 1935, p. 1.

the regime treated its citizens.⁴

Upon arriving at Ustica, Carlo was struck by its "tragic and naked beauty." Although he was on Ustica for only a month, it left an impression on him, not only for its character but for the friendships forged:

Irons and chains fall. A little massage of the wrists, formalities, greetings and then off in recognizance of the dirty and extremely vivacious alleys: pigs, chickens, dogs, chicks, guards, *confinati*, common criminals. Noah's Ark must not have been exactly pleasurable. And yet, what is this strange inebriation that takes hold of me? This first day of life on Ustica is exciting, I seem to be born again. After a long prison stay, the first day of *confino* is an orgy, an explosion of the physical self.⁵

At Ustica there was Mario Angeloni, later to fight alongside Rosselli in Spain in 1936. In addition, there was Giuseppe Massarenti, mayor of Molinella and leader of a major cooperative movement of agricultural day-laborers. On Lipari, Rosselli would befriend Massarenti's aide Paolo Fabbri who was implicated in Rosselli's successful escape and spent a year in prison for his act of courage, never betraying his fleeing friends.

On 10 June 1927, exactly three years after the assassination of Giacomo Matteotti, Marion Cave Rosselli gave birth to their first child Giovanni Rosselli, nicknamed "Il Mirtillino" or "Little Blueberry Bush." As so often happened in their lives, Carlo and Nello's fates seemed to be intertwined, sometimes in a positive way, more often in a tragic manner. That same day, Nello, presumed by the fascist authorities to be involved with the clandestine expatriations, was

⁴The incidents are recounted in Garosci, *Vita* I, pp. 111 and 117; also in Levi, *Ricordi dei fratelli Rosselli*, p. 104.

⁵"Fuga in quattro tempi," in *Opere scelte* vol. I, p. 514.

arrested and held for a month at Murate, the prison of Florence. Asking to be sent to Ustica to be reunited with his brother, it was one of those common bitter ironies that Nello was in transit to the island when Carlo was being sent back for trial at Savona. The younger brother remained at Ustica from July of 1927 until February of 1928; it was not his last taste of prison life.

By a curious and fortunate anomaly of fascist legislation, "clandestine expatriation," even for political reasons, did not fall under the jurisdiction of the feared Tribunale Speciale which had been established in November of 1926 and began work in February 1927. Instead, Rosselli, Parri and Pertini had the relative good fortune to be presented before the *magistratura ordinaria* which had not yet completely fallen under the domination of the regime and therefore might have sought a symbolic gesture of its judicial independence.

At Savona, knowing that the evidence was against them, Rosselli and Parri decided to use the occasion of the trial to garner as much negative publicity against the regime as possible. The trial would be turned into a showcase for the foreign press on how civil and political liberties had been destroyed in an Italy where "the trains ran on time." During the long months between capture at Marina di Carrara, the prison of Como and the internment on Ustica, Rosselli had decided irrevocably on fighting fascism with all his resources. Parri recalls long nights in prison when Carlo seemed possessed of a determination that seemed frightening. They decided to transform the trial into a political drama against fascism. In preparation for this, Rosselli read *The Confessions* of Rousseau (a

"great book" he thought), the essays of Taine, a biography of Karl Marx, the writings of Ernest Renan and Benedetto Croce's *Filosofia della pratica*. Besides reading, he was engaged in writing a work on utilitarianism.⁶ With his mother, he argued over the merits of Gioacchino Volpe's recently published history of Italy. Volpe, professor of history at the Universities of Milan (1905-24) and Rome (1924-1940) began his career as a medievalist and became the foremost historian to support fascism. His *Storia del movimento fascista* of 1939 crowned his career as the official historian of the regime. Volpe's *L'Italia in Cammino* was published in early 1927 and challenged only six months later by its antithesis, Croce's *Storia d'Italia*.⁷ As a fervent nationalist, Amelia defended Volpe's work but Carlo was stinging in his reply:

Scratch, scratch and in *mutter* one always finds a bit of nationalism. I am not at all enthusiastic about *Italia in cammino* and for many reasons. First of all because the book is not sincere. Ah! How many intentional tepid evasions and contortions. Its only merit is in confronting for the first time, with a minimum of competence, the political history of the *cinquantennio* [the fifty years between unification and fascism]. But I would say it is not really **acute** nor **profound** in its synthesis...⁸

⁶The letters are from 21 and 28 March, 4 and 10 April, 17 June 1927; all in AGL with 4 April and 17 June reproduced in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 335-36 and 346. The 148 pages of notes for the work on utilitarianism are collected in the AGL, sezione I, fascicolo 3, sottofascicolo 1, inserto 10.

⁷On Volpe, see Edward R. Tannenbaum, "Gioacchino Volpe" in *Historians of Modern Europe*, ed. Hans Schmitt. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1971, pp. 315-38; Innocenzo Cervelli, *Gioacchino Volpe*. Naples: Guida, 1977; "Volpe, Gioacchino" in *Encyclopedia of Historiography*, ed. D.R. Woolf, New York: Garland, forthcoming.

⁸Letter of 27 September 1927 in AGL; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 355-56; also in Tranfaglia, p. 352. The German "mutter" (mother) is in the original.

The trial, finally, opened in Savona on 9 September 1927.⁹ Yet Rosselli had already set the stage for the drama with a letter to the judge insisting on the political significance of the trial.¹⁰ He declared that Turati's escape was based on political reasons and not affection.

In the name of justice that pursues an non-existent network of complicity--and which still detains persons who are absolutely extraneous to the crime it must be said that the first and only subject responsible, incriminated by the consciences of free men, is fascism. Fascism which has suppressed with blind violence and fulminated with unjust laws every possibility of legal opposition...

It was, for Rosselli, a desperate struggle, made sacred by the blood of men like Matteotti, Gobetti and Amendola. Helping Turati escape was "an austere protest," meant to be seen as "a cry of alarm to the civilized world, to offer a living proof of the definitive break between two Italies, between two moral races, between two opposite conceptions of life..." Shrewdly, Rosselli cast himself in the tradition of the *Risorgimento* and reminded the judge of his own personal history:

A socialist, I came to socialism after the defeat, in the conviction that the redemption of the workers must rest on an unshakable moral base and take back, integrating, the tradition of a *Risorgimento* that has remained the patrimony of a few...

It comforts and confirms me to think that this substantial continuity that I claim between the struggle of today and yesterday finds a characteristic echo in the history of my family. A Rosselli secretly sheltered in Pisa a dying Mazzini, an exile in his own country. It was only logical that another Rosselli, a half century later, tried to save from fascist fury one of the most noble and unselfish spirits of the country.

The trial unfolded between 9-13 September. The three judges allowed Parri

⁹On the trial, see Tranfaglia, pp. 343-60 and Levi, pp. 109-116. The complete transcript of the trial is preserved in the Archivio di Stato (Savona). For a reconstruction of the trial, see Vico Faggi, ed. *Il processo di Savona*, Genoa: Teatro Stabile, 1965.

¹⁰The letter has been translated and appears in Appendix C.

and Rosselli time to address the court and both took full advantage. Inside and outside the courtroom, a large public had gathered and notwithstanding the ominous presence of the fascist police and militia, made no attempt to hide their support of the defendants. In addition, a large press contingent had arrived to follow the trial and devoted ample coverage during the first few days; as a result, the prefect of Savona issued orders that the trial not be featured prominently in the papers. One of the best documents we have of the trial and its attendant atmosphere are the reports from a correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, Barbara Carter.¹¹ Soon after the trial, in a letter to Turati, Rosselli called the final presentations between his defence lawyer Erizzo and the public prosecutor highly symbolic: On one side the State--"this State with its blind, brutal, despotic and suffocating force; on the other all of a great judicial patrimony and the moral conscience of the individual that at a certain point cries 'enough!' and redeems with action the supreme right of rebellion."¹² In one of those turns of history that was not uncommon in post-fascist Italy, the public prosecutor Ernesto Eula became the first president of the Corte Suprema di Cassazione.

On the evening of the 13th, the three judges, Pasquale Sarno, G. Antonio Donadu and A. Guido Melinossi, returned from their deliberations and announced the sentences: Turati, Pertini, Parri, Rosselli, Dabove, Oxilia and Boyancé were found guilty of article 160 of the Law of Public Security (6 November 1926, n.

¹¹AGL, fascicolo III, sottofascicolo 5.

¹²Carlo Rosselli to Filippo Turati, letter of 18 September 1927, now in *Il processo di Savona*, ed. Vico Faggi, pp. 160-62.

1848) Oxilia was sentenced to one year, one month and twenty days;¹³ the rest condemned to only ten months. In light of time already served, and in the political context of the trial, this amounted to an acquittal, as all those present realized. Nearly twenty years later, the chief magistrate, Pasquale Sarno revealed that the regime had an inordinate interest in the trial:

There were many insistent pressures placed upon me both verbally and in writing, that the crime deserved several years in prison; I hid those suggestions from my colleagues so as not to make any impression on them, even though I knew full well the firmness of their character and their moral rectitude. It was written to me "that the Head of Government [i.e. Mussolini] was personally interested in the matter and was watching Savona;" that "my career depended on the outcome of the trial"...But we obeyed only the voice of our conscience...Unfortunately, thereafter, we were not spared from much bitterness!...¹⁴

Upon the pronouncement of the sentence, the courtroom burst into a spontaneous delirium and Sarno recalled that he restored order only after several long minutes during which the news made its way out into the street. Cries of "Viva il tribunale di Savona!" and "Viva la giustizia!" were met with threats by the assembled fascists who called the sentence "an iniquity" passed by "antifascist" judges. The following day, Savona's fascist newspaper *Il Brandale* deplored the outcome and raged against "robed antifascism."¹⁵

According to the transcript of the trial, Rosselli, Parri, Pertini and the others were sentenced to only ten months; yet Mussolini, following the trial from

¹³In 1940, Oxilia signed a lengthy (8 single-spaced typewritten pages) confession for the fascist police concerning his part in the escape; see ACS, Busta 4421, fascicolo 4.

¹⁴Pasquale Sarno, *Il Mondo* (VIII) 17 January 1956, p. 3.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

Rome, telegraphed the *procuratore generale* of Genoa to appeal the sentence. As a result, an additional sentence of five years *confino* was appended to Rosselli's sentence. Carlo remained at Savona until the last week of December, when he was transferred to the penal island of Lipari. During those months, several letters reveal his state of mind: elated by the original verdict and sentence, he was not discouraged by the intervention of Mussolini and the five year sentence. In a characteristic gesture of defiance, he wrote that he would not pass five years on Lipari. "I have fallen from the clouds without, naturally, any harm. On the contrary!" Yet only six weeks later, awaiting transport to Lipari he wrote "1927 will remain for us the black year...in which we have touched bottom." He prepared a strenuous course of reading and writing to utilize the forced stay at Lipari, asking for Guido De Ruggiero's *Storia del liberalismo europeo* and various works of Taine, Labriola, and others; it appears that his greatest concern, besides the welfare of Marion and his son, was his imminent separation from Parri who was being sent to Ustica.¹⁶

The full significance of the trial was not lost on the public. As the regime was consolidating its power, the trial can be seen as one of the last acts of liberal Italy; the last gasp of freedom before the full implementation of the Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State became fully operational. Parri at the time referred to fascism as "a parenthesis," (anticipating Croce's interpretation) and called for a second *Risorgimento* which would be the basis for the resistance

¹⁶Letters of September-December 1927; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 351-375.

movement.¹⁷ Carlo Levi recalled that the trial had "all the characteristics of the absurd, of authority and paternal sacrality...a political and moral battle: a last, moving act of faith almost at the limits of the absurd..."¹⁸ A moment of high drama took place during Rosselli's interrogation by the *Ispettore Generale* Cunsolo, when the accused became the accuser:

Rosselli: ...in Milan there were no victims [of the fascists]?

Cunsolo: I said no.

Rosselli: And outside of Milan?

Cunsolo: It doesn't concern me.

Rosselli: The antifascists, therefore, are undisturbed, Mr. Inspector General. The public order is not disturbed by the fascists?

Cunsolo: Yes.

Rosselli: You do not remember the events in Florence?

Cunsolo: They are not in my jurisdiction.

Rosselli: Did you hear that in Florence they killed the Honorable Pilati? [member of Chamber of Deputies].

Cunsolo: (weaker) This has no bearing.

Rosselli: The lawyer Delaini?

Cunsolo: I do not need to respond.

Rosselli: The railroad worker Becciolini?

Cunsolo: I do not need...

Rosselli: You know nothing of the "night of blood?"¹⁹

Cunsolo: I cannot...

Rosselli: Someone was killed in his bed.

Cunsolo: I cannot...

Rosselli: By shots from a revolver.

Cunsolo: No.

Rosselli: It was the correspondent of *Avanti!* You know his name. Say it! Who was it?

¹⁷Ferruccio Parri, *Scritti: 1915-1975*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976, p. 45. See also his account of Turati's escape and the trial in "Dall'espatrio al processo" in *Il processo di Savona*, pp. 98-102.

¹⁸Carlo Levi, "Ricordi del processo," in *Il processo di Savona*, pp. 95-97.

¹⁹The *notte di sangue* was a massacre carried out by the fascists in Florence in October 1925.

Cunsolo: (wearily, whispering) My brother.²⁰

The correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, Barbara Carter, managed to slip into the courtroom pretending to be the cousin of Marion Cave. A *carabiniere* posted at the trial heard her English accent and accepted her story. In one of her dispatches from Savona, Carter wrote:

...Everyone shared the pessimism of the young reporter from the newspaper *Il Lavoro* of Genoa, who, sitting next to me during the entire unfolding of the trial and finding himself within reach of the white collar of one of the lawyers wrote on it with a pencil while no one was looking: *Hic jacet mortua justitia*.²¹

The judges themselves lent an air of surrealism to the proceedings with their creative interpretation in arriving at a decision and sentence. Both Rosselli and Parri had unequivocally stated that it was for political reasons that they had assisted in Turati's escape. They had pointed to the massacres of October 1925 and November 1926 and the fascist gangs that sang beneath Turati's window as proof that a "state of necessity" existed for Turati's flight. In their decision though, the judges explicitly denied this argument²² for to grant it would be to implicitly condemn the regime. Yet in the very next sentence, they held that the affair was not politically motivated,²³ in which case they would have been

²⁰This dialogue, found in Faggi's play (pp. 53-54), is based on the transcript of the trial in the Archivio di Stato at Savona.

²¹Barbara Carter in *Il Mese*, 30 July 1945; quoted in Faggi, p. 113.

²²"L'espatrio clandestino...non fu determinato dallo stato di necessità." ["The clandestine expatriation was not determined by a state of necessity."] Faggi, p. 150.

²³"Ma il Collegio ritiene che non fosse determinato neanche da motivo politico..." ["But the Court holds that neither was it determined by a political motive..."], Faggi, p.151. As if to emphasize this interpretation, it is repeat nearly verbatim a page later: "Pare.. al Collegio che non

constrained to impose a sentence of between three and six years. Instead the judges forged a "creative" interpretation: Turati was old and sick; his only concern was to find someplace in which a cure would be forthcoming. The judges were able to use this line of reasoning because of the testimony of Turati's doctor (Ghilardoni); yet reading between the lines one can interpret "fascism" as the illness. As for Pertini, the judges decided that he had simply taken advantage of Turati's journey to remain in France to "look for work that in Savona he could not find" and to leave his family home where conditions made "cohabitation impossible because of a brother who was a member of the fascists."²⁴ Rosselli and the others were guilty merely of *concorso* ["attendance" or "cooperation"] and consequently given the lenient sentence of ten months. "Ten of these trials," complained a fascist lawyer, "and the regime is done for."²⁵ As for Carlo, he still had a sentence of five years *confino*. "I make no plans for the future," he wrote to Turati in Paris immediately after the trial, "I believe though, that I will not remain more than a year in *confino*. Read between the lines..."²⁶

da motivi politici sia stato determinato l'espatrio clandestino di Turati e Pertini." Ibid., p. 152.

²⁴Quoted in Faggi, p. 152.

²⁵The remark was overheard by Rosselli at the end of the trial and conveyed to Turati by Rosselli in a letter of 18 September 1927. The letter is preserved in the AGL, sezione I, fascicolo 1, sottofascicolo 120 and reprinted in Faggi, pp. 160-62.

²⁶Ibid.

Lipari

If Ustica, as Rosselli wrote, was a parenthesis between the two prisons of Como and Savona, Lipari was "an open parenthesis."²⁷ Rosselli arrived at the penal island of Lipari off the northern coast of Sicily on 28 December 1927.²⁸ Lipari was a marked improvement over Ustica. Francesco Fausto Nitti, nephew of the former prime minister, and familiar with the other penal islands, called it a "terrestrial paradise."²⁹ Two weeks before Rosselli's arrival, the fascists had uncovered a "conspiracy" to overthrow the regime; consequently 250 persons were accused and held in prison for nine months before being acquitted by the court in Siracusa.³⁰ It was into this atmosphere of suspicion and false rumors that Carlo landed on Lipari. Yet his writings concerning the stay on Lipari do not mention the harshness and brutality of the guards (and indeed sometimes the other prisoners; for in addition to the political prisoners, who were almost always considerate with each other notwithstanding their ideological differences, there were also common criminals on the island and they were sometimes more brutal

²⁷"Fuga in quattro tempi," in *Opere Scelte*, vol. I, p. 514.

²⁸On his stay at Lipari see A. Levi, *Ricordi dei fratelli Rosselli*, pp. 116-121; Garosci, *Vita* I, pp. 125-130, 159-172; documents of his confinement are in the AGL sezione I, fascicolo 7, sottofascicolo 1.

²⁹Francesco Fausto Nitti, *Nous prisons et nous évasion*, Paris: Edizioni di Giustizia e Libertà, 1930. After the war, an Italian edition appeared: *Le nostre prigioni e la nostra evasione*. Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1946. See also his *Escape: The Personal Narrative of a Political Prisoner who was Rescued from Lipari, the Fascist "Devil's Island"*, New York: Putman, 1930.

³⁰Garosci, *Vita* I, p. 126.

than the guards.) Soon after his arrival, Marion was able to join him with little Giovanni, and the small family settled down to a tranquil (if unorthodox) existence after renting a small house. Indeed, Marion recalled those early days on Lipari as "another honeymoon."³¹ The Rosselli family, in truth, led a privileged existence on Lipari, able to rent and furnish a house and acquire some small luxuries. Carlo, though immensely happy that his small family was reunited on the island, was brutally honest in recognizing his shortcomings as a husband and father: "I seek to foster my scarce sense of paternity. He who concerns himself with humanity in general, finds it difficult to be a good father."³²

Rosselli came to be regarded as a model prisoner by the island administrator. When information arrived from Rome of rumors that the model prisoner was planning an escape, the Director of the penal colony replied that he wished all prisoners were like Rosselli. But it was all an elaborate charade. From the moment the sentence was announced, Rosselli had been planning an escape from Lipari, something that no one had yet accomplished. Carlo established a daily schedule that was fixed in stone and the citizens of Lipari as well as the police came to expect his daily appearance on the streets at certain times (reminiscent of Kant's daily walks in Königsberg). He discussed a project with the landlord to bring up water from a well on the property, concerned himself with establishing a library for the prisoners, planned a course of reading and study, and

³¹Ibid.

³²"Fuga in quattro tempi," in *Opere Scelte*, vol. I, p. 514.

even managed to rent a piano brought over from the mainland (there were none on the island) so that he could pass the evenings with the music of Beethoven and Chopin. (Actually, the piano was to serve another, hidden, function.) All this was done to establish in the minds of the police that Rosselli was patiently resigned to his fate and willing to pass five years on the island.

In reality, Rosselli had already made contact with Nitti and Emilio Lussu about a possible escape. Lussu was a war veteran and Sardinian radical who had been arrested when he shot and killed a fascist *squadrista* who was breaking into his home.³³ Acquitted in the courtroom on the grounds of legitimate self-defense, Lussu was nonetheless sentenced to *confino*. Rosselli, Nitti and Lussu were fortunate in finding Gioacchino Dolci on Lipari; Dolci was a young worker from Rome who had participated in the republican movement. He was eventually released and was instrumental in organizing the escape effort of July 1929 as well as the founding of *Giustizia e Libertà* in Paris.³⁴ Along with Dolci, there was Paolo Fabbri, a peasant from Molinella. Whereas Dolci was the intellectual-- "There is in him a constitutional detachment from all that forms the ambition of the normal man...He struggles against bourgeois philistinism....," Fabbri was the opposite: "Son of the earth, he has its concreteness and fertility...Fabbri is the

³³See Emilio Lussu, *Marcia su Roma e dintorni*. Milan: Mondadori, 1980 (first published in 1945); translated as *An Autobiographical Account by a Leading Sardinian Republican Politician of Resistance to Fascism in Sardinia from 1919-1930*. trans. Roy W. Davis. Edwin Mellen Press, 1992. Lussu's correspondence with Rosselli is found in *Lettere a Carlo Rosselli e altri scritti di Giustizia e Libertà*. ed. Manlio Brigaglia. Sassari: Libreria Dessi, 1979. For his account of Lipari, see *La catena: dalle leggi eccezionali alle isole*, Paris; Edizioni di Giustizia e Libertà, 1929.

³⁴See Rosselli's notes on Dolci in the BNF, FR, cassetta 1, inserto III, #1.

proof of the vitality of socialism..."³⁵

The Rosselli house soon became a focal point for the social and intellectual life of the community of political prisoners. Carlo forged strong ties with the anarchists and even invited the entire (admittedly small) anarchist community to his house. On the feast of the Epiphany, the tradition of the Befana (good witch) bringing gifts to small children was continued: Nitti dressed as the Befana and 120 children of the *confinati* were given modest treats. While Carlo studied German with one group, Marion gave English lessons to another. This second study group was created for the express purpose of allowing Nitti and Lussu to frequent the Rosselli house without arousing suspicion.³⁶

It was during the time on Lipari (December 1927-July 1929) that Rosselli drafted what was to be his major theoretical work, *Socialismo liberale*. Written clandestinely, it survived the many police searches hidden in the piano and latter a rabbit hutch in the garden.³⁷ It was smuggled off the island by Marion Rosselli in June 1927, one month before Rosselli's escape.

On Lipari, Rosselli continued to play the part of the resigned *confinato*, with a strenuous program of reading, including Croce's *La rivoluzione napoletana del 1899*; Rodolfo Mondolfo's *Sulle orme di Marx* and *Mazzini e Marx*;

³⁵"Fuga in quattro tempi," p. 516.

³⁶Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 130.

³⁷Marion Cave Rosselli, "Lettera della moglie," *Socialismo liberale*, Rome, Florence, Milan: Edizioni U, 1945. This letter, which serves as a sort of forward to the first Italian edition was written while the Rosselli family was in exile in Larchmont, NY during the Second World War (November 1944).

Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*; Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (which Rosselli had first read in November-December 1918, immediately after the Armistice).³⁸

Yet his inner torment allowed for no real peace. In a letter, he revealed his true thinking:

And so we continue in total peace, almost as though this were our normal life. Sometimes I try to portray with precision my state and to compare it with the life of the enormous majority of other men. And it seems nearly impossible, only because a single gigantic problem troubles me, that in the rest of the country life continues to unfold with the customary rhythm as if nothing happened. Are we outside of life and reality; or the others? By dint of existing in an exceptional state, all rapport, all values, seem to me upside-down or strangely deformed. For how long will we be destined to this state?³⁹

Plans were constantly being formulated, re-formulated, abandoned, and revised for an escape:

Long calculations on paper. Tunisia, Malta, Corsica. 300 miles, 250 miles, 400 miles...Everyone believes Rosselli to be completely settled. There is even a cliché in the island administration: "peaceful, studious, he will pass five years well." I do everything I can to color the picture. Only some friend knows that the cliché is false.⁴⁰

After several schemes were voted down, including the possibility of a hydroplane landing offshore, a consensus was reached. Rosselli, Lussu and Nitti decided that the best possibility of success rested in swimming out off the shore to be picked up by a passing boat, hired beforehand and with a fixed appointment. On 17 November 1928, they carried out the first attempt. Spending the day hoeing a

³⁸See Rosselli's letters of 6 February, 15 April, 22 August and 18 October 1928, AGL; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 399, 409, 411, 424.

³⁹Letter of 16 February 1928; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 403.

⁴⁰"Fuga in quattro tempi," in *Opere Scelte* vol. I, p. 515.

small garden to allay any suspicions, they waited for a rendezvous that failed to take place. (The first boat rented was too small to navigate the rough waters that night.) "Thirty minutes are one thousand eight hundred seconds. He who has waited for a motorboat that does not arrive can claim to have gone through the entire Christian era."⁴¹ Slowly, it dawns upon them that the motorboat will not be coming. Now the problem was to return to their houses before eight o'clock and the nightly rounds of inspection by the fascist police.

I take the path of the fields. But my eyeglasses are lost and my eyes full of salt. I can see nothing. I forge ahead, stumbling often. I run. I crash into a wall of barbed wire. Four points puncture my eyebrow and cheekbone, and, it seems to me, an eye. Agitation. Blood. I wipe myself to find out if I can see. I see. Then go. In the last stretch, I slip into a tiny path. A little girl watches--extremely frightened--this giant, bloody thing. I enter the house panting. I run to the mirror.

My face is all red with blood. Now I understand the fear of the little girl. I work feverishly to hide the evidence of the crime...I dress. After fifteen minutes, the patrol arrives.⁴²

The next morning, all returned to normal. The other prisoners and guards, upon seeing Rosselli the next morning and knowing that Marion had left the island, assumed that Rosselli's injuries were the result of some amorous adventure. Carlo smiled sweetly at these conjectures and responded truthfully, "No, no, I fell in the garden yesterday."⁴³

Even though the first attempt at escape had ended in failure, an unexpected piece of good fortune was to come their way. Dolci was released from Lipari on

⁴¹Ibid., p. 518.

⁴²Ibid., p. 519.

⁴³Ibid.

7 December and eventually made his way to France in March 1929. There, he coordinated new efforts to free Rosselli, Lussu and Nitti. A new motorboat, the "Dream V" was purchased in Tunisia from an Egyptian prince (with Rosselli's money) and registered to "Lord Cave," Marion's father.⁴⁴ Italo Oxilia, the pilot of the boat that brought Turati to France, was hired for another attempt in July.

On 23 June 1929, Marion and "Mirtillino" left Lipari. On the 26th of July, Rosselli and his companions were again in the waters off shore, but again, the motorboat failed to appear. That night, Rosselli dreamt of a lion following him on a *tapis roulant*: Lussu interpreted the dream in a flash: *tapis roulant*=flight; lion=Africa.⁴⁵

The next evening another attempt was made. This time, the three remained in the surf long after the eight o'clock curfew. Under the noses of the prison director and fascist police who were enjoying a summer ice-cream by the shore, the three managed to climb aboard the silently waiting motorboat. The engines were started and the motorboat sped away and toward the north African shore.

A great sadness seizes me after the initial tumultuous joy. I contemplate the phosphorescent wake, the small lights, think of all the comrades, friends, less fortunate than we. We silently give our last goodbye to Lipari.⁴⁶

The motorboat made its way to Cape Bon in Tunisia, then Corsica and

⁴⁴Alberto Tarchiani, "L'impressa di Lipari," in *No al fascismo*, p. 107.

⁴⁵"Fuga in quattro tempi," p. 523.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 524.

Marseilles (31 July). Ironically, Rosselli and the others were stranded in Marseilles because the French communists and train workers had declared a strike. Eventually, Rosselli and the others made their way to Paris. News of their escape electrified the antifascist community and focused new attention on political conditions within Italy. For Rosselli, "one thought will guide us in this hospitable land: to turn this personal freedom that had been conquered with much difficulty into an instrument for the freedom of a people. Only in this way does it seem right to exchange a prison *in patria* with freedom in exile."⁴⁷

Liberal Socialism

If Rosselli had disturbed the waters with his early articles and "Autocritica," the publication of *Socialisme libéral* in 1930 generated a veritable tidal wave of indignation and criticism.⁴⁸ The work stands as the interpretive key in an understanding of Rosselli's heretical critique of socialism and Marxism and delineates his vision of a liberal socialism that is a viable alternative to both free-

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 525.

⁴⁸The first edition of Rosselli's only book appeared in a French edition, *Socialisme libéral*, trans. Stefan Priacel, Paris: Libraire Valois, 1930. For the criticism, the typical views were expressed by "Rabano Mauro" (Claudio Treves), in his review "Socialisme libéral," in *La Libertà*, 15 January 1931 and Giuseppe Saragat in "Rosselli e Socialisme libéral," in *Avanti!*, 10 January 1931; now in Giuseppe Saragat, *Quarant'anni di lotta per la democrazia*, Milan: Mursia, 1965, pp. 179-82. Significantly, one of the few positive reviews was written by the anarchist Luigi Fabbri in *Studi sociale: Rivista di libero esame*, 16 August 1931. See Rosselli's letter to Fabbri in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 170-72.

market liberalism and the apocalyptic seduction of Marxism. It can be read, parallel with Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, as a study of the defeat of democracy and socialism in the face of fascism, and posits a viable position "beyond" liberalism, Marxism or fascism.⁴⁹

The manuscript had been written while Rosselli was in *confino* on Lipari. From her exile in America, Marion wrote that Carlo had managed to rent a piano on Lipari and play Beethoven and Chopin; the piano also served to hide the manuscript from frequent police searches. It was Marion who managed to spirit the manuscript off the island.⁵⁰

The first Italian edition appeared in 1945, with a letter by Marion and Treves' critical review.⁵¹ Since the original manuscript was still in the hands of the family, which had fled France before the oncoming German Army in 1940, this first Italian edition was based on the French edition of 1930 under the supervision of Aldo Garosci and Leone Bortone. After the war, the original manuscript was deposited in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, and forms the

⁴⁹Nadia Urbinati, Introduction to Carlo Rosselli's *Liberal Socialism*, p.xxxiv.

⁵⁰"As an expression of a noble character, devoted to a single ideal--the betterment of the Italian working classes, the book has a place in the history of political thought in Italy," Marion Cave Rosselli, "Lettera della moglie," in the first Italian edition of *Socialismo liberale*, Rome, Florence, Milan: Edizioni U, 1945, p. 4. Of this first Italian edition, 3,100 copies were printed; 10 copies were for the Rosselli family, 90 for libraries, 100 were for the press and the remaining 2900 for the public. It was not until 1973 that a new edition of the work appeared, *Socialismo liberale*, vol. I of *Opere scelte di Carlo Rosselli*, ed. John Rosselli, Turin: Einaudi, 1973.

⁵¹Carlo Rosselli, *Socialismo liberale*, Rome, Florence, Milan: Edizione U, 1945.

heart of the Fondo Rosselli.⁵²

In his attack against Marxism's economic determinism and continuing reliance on positivism (at least in Italy), Rosselli also pointed out the problems in the revisionist project that had begun with Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism*.⁵³ Like Bernstein, Rosselli attempted a re-visioning of socialism from within its ranks; and like Bernstein he was subject to the wrath of the orthodox against the heretic. While recognizing that Marx was undoubtedly part of modern consciousness, that the ideas and precepts of Marxism had embedded themselves in the psyche of contemporary society, Rosselli felt that the evolution of Marxism during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century had made it an obstacle to the emancipation of the laboring classes. For the faithful, this was tantamount to declaring that Christianity was an obstacle to the salvation of the soul.

Another avenue to understanding *Socialismo liberale* is Rosselli's notes during his reading of Henri De Man's *Au delà du marxisme* which had appeared in 1927.⁵⁴ Rosselli was able to read the work in December of 1928 and was

⁵²The original manuscript, written in tiny script on small pieces of paper to facilitate its hiding from the police in the piano is preserved in the BNF, Fondo Rosselli, cassetta 1, inserto I. On the vicissitudes of the manuscript and its complicated publication history, see John Rosselli, "Nota editoriale a *Socialismo liberale*," in *Socialismo liberale*, Turin: Einaudi, 1973, pp. 349-50.

⁵³Eduard Bernstein, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*, Stuttgart: J.H.W. Dietz Nach, 1899; English translation by Edith C. Harvey as *Evolutionary Socialism*, Introduction by Sidney Hook, New York: Schocken Books, 1961.

⁵⁴Henri De Man (1885-1953) was a Belgian thinker who moved from anarchism to Marxism. Time spent in Russia, though, made him question the basic tenets of Marxism. The French translation was of his most noted work, *Zur Psychologie des Sozialismus* of 1926. An English translation appeared as *The Psychology of Socialism*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul, London: Allen

enthusiastic in his praise:

Here is a book, indeed, the book, my book, the book that I have so often dreamed of writing, so often begun, always abandoned, It is the courageous, honest and very acute confession of a disenchanted Marxist or rather a convinced and practical socialist who sees the Marxist gospel vaporize in the light of facts and hard experience.⁵⁵

De Man had realized that the crisis of Marxism was two-fold: intellectual and political. Rosselli agreed with De Man that Marxism reduced man to a mere subject of the social environment and denied the possibility of free will with its insistence on its "scientific" character. In addition, the Marxists offered a caricature of the working class: the proletariat recognized that the bourgeoisie had a better standard of living and, for better or worse, aspired to that standard.

De Man's thesis is that utopia, the vision of the future, in the isolated thinker as well as the masses, is born from repressed desires...The conclusion is that it is not possible to justify socialism only with reason.⁵⁶

Later, in *Liberal Socialism*, Rosselli returns to the psychological insights of De Man when he quotes the Belgian in that "Mankind can assuage its deepest nostalgia, the victory over time, only by transforming its future ends into drives in the present, and thus incorporating a fragment of the future in the present."⁵⁷

Rosselli's book begins with an apology, explaining that "the evident

& Unwin, 1928.

⁵⁵Rosselli's notes on De Man are in the BNF, FR, cassetta 2, inserto VIII, n. 1.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷*Liberal Socialism*, p. 82.

lacunae and lack of notes and bibliography" were the result of "the peculiar state of tension in which it was composed." Yet clearly, Rosselli had no intention of writing an academic book or adding to the growing volume of revisionist literature. *Liberal Socialism* was to be "an explicit confession of an intellectual crisis that I know to be very widespread among the new generation of socialists."⁵⁸ The crisis was more profound than thirty years ago when Bernstein's book first appeared, for now the very principles of Marxism were in crisis and not just their practical application. The first part of the book (chapters I-V) is a critique of Marxism and the revisionist tradition; the second half contains Rosselli's program of a "liberal socialism." The author admits that "from the historical point of view this formula might seem to contain a contradiction" since socialism arose as a reaction to nineteenth century liberalism and especially its economic doctrines. Yet Rosselli was convinced that history was moving to reconcile the two positions: "Liberalism has gradually become cognizant of the social problem and no longer appears automatically bound to the principles of classical, Manchesterian economics. Socialism is stripping itself, though not easily, of its utopianism and is acquiring a new awareness of the problems of liberty and autonomy."⁵⁹ Was it that liberalism was becoming more socialistic, or that socialism was being infused with a touch of liberalism? For Rosselli, the transformations were occurring simultaneously. Both liberalism and socialism

⁵⁸*Liberal Socialism*, p. 5. All references will be from the English translation. I have slightly changed the translation in places.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 6.

contained "an exalted but narrow vision of life." Both had an ancient lineage:

Greek rationalism and the messianism of Israel.

The first contains a love of liberty, a respect for autonomy, a harmonious and detached conception of life.

In the second the sense of justice is entirely down-to-earth; there is a myth of equality, and a spiritual torment that forbids all indulgence.⁶⁰

The two great ethical and cultural pillars of Western civilization had political ramifications.

The first chapter, "The Marxist System," argues that Marxism is a closed, unified system and therefore cannot be amended. With the materialist conception of history and the discovery of surplus value, "scientific socialism" had vanquished its ideological enemies and conquered the field.⁶¹ Marx had claimed to discover the underlying laws governing the unfolding of history. Communism was, therefore, not an idea or proposition, but was to be the result of a process immanent in history. Economic necessity was fundamental in human societies, and the historical process was the result of a dialectical play of forces. The expansive forces of production were constrained by the conservative nature of existing social relations, leading to class struggle. The capitalist system was "lacerated" by an inherent contradiction: while the system of production, symbolized by the factory, tended toward greater and greater collectivism, the means of production and exchange tended to remain in the hands of individuals or monopolies. This

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹The term "scientific socialism" was first coined by Frederick Engels in his *Socialism: From Utopian to Scientific*, now in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, trans. Richard Dixon, et. al., New York: International Publishers, 1975-, vol. 24, p. 305.

inevitably led to the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, with the eventual victory of the proletariat assured.

It could be argued that Rosselli was merely setting up a straw man to knock over and no doubt some of this analysis might verge on over-simplification. Yet can it not be denied that Rosselli had correctly discerned a "crisis of Marxism" in Italy and sought the causes of that crisis.

Part of that crisis involved a conception of the role played by human will and actions in history. Under the influence of Feuerbach's radical humanism and historicism,⁶² Marx had defended human will in history. But, according to Rosselli, that emphasis gradually dissipated as Marx became convinced that history was governed by immutable laws, similar to the laws of nature. The result was that, "psychologically speaking, the Marxian man is no more than the *homo oeconomicus* of Bentham." The Marxian conception of the world was based on the historical inevitability of *things* changing, not the transformation of human beings. Eventually, the proletariat will revolt, but only after the external mechanisms of capitalist production change. The immanent laws of capitalism dictate that the capitalist hoard wealth and pay his workers the lowest possible wage in order to keep body and soul together; the proletariat cannot protest. No wonder then, wrote Rosselli, that *Capital* has been called the most intransigent apologia for

⁶²Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, eds. E. Graham Waring and F.W. Strothman, New York: Frederick Ungar, 1957; on Feuerbach's influence on Marx and Engels, see Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*, New York: International Publishers, 1941.

capitalism!⁶³ The real problem for Rosselli though, is that once "human will" is entered into the equation of the historical process, sociological prognosis becomes impossible.⁶⁴

There is one aspect of Marxism that attenuates this determinism and allows for the element of human will: the theory of class struggle. How does Marx reconcile the idea that history is following immutable laws and the conception of class struggle which presupposes conscious human activity? By arguing that the class struggle is the *necessary* result of the conflict that exists in things themselves; it is the human face of the dialectic immanent in things.⁶⁵ The dramatic collision of the contradictory elements of capitalism is the catalyst for revolution, not the consciousness of the proletariat.

Chapter Two, "From Marxism to Revisionism" opens with a provocative thought: using Marxism to write a history of revisionism. Such a history had not yet been written, although as Rosselli correctly pointed out, we should not expect the orthodox priesthood to give us the history of heresy. The revisionists themselves, like other heretics wishing to deny their heretical nature, have also failed in providing that history. Such a study would be both "singularly ironic and suggestive," since it would force Marxism to examine its own presuppositions and in the process "devour itself." If we accept Marx's position that ideology reflects

⁶³*Liberal Socialism*, p. 14.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

the stage of development reached by the forces of production and class relations, then the profound economic and social transformations that have taken place since Marx's day would force us to undertake a substantial revision of Marxism--unless Marxist relativism applies to everything--economics, law, art, politics, and morality--except Marxist doctrine itself.⁶⁶ Here, Rosselli cunningly turned Marx's radical historicism in on itself.

The history of Marxism could be defined in three stages, according to Rosselli: the religious, the critical and the present. The first, ending around the turn of the century, saw Marxism as a new religion, promising secular redemption and equated Marxism with socialism. Marxism was to be applied, not interpreted. While the rest of humanity was clouded in false ideologies and worshipped false idols, only the Marxists saw the path to the promised land. Marxism's great attraction for the masses was not in its critical understanding of the capitalist system, but rather the certainty it instilled in its followers that they were on the right road in the teleological drama of history. A reading of the *Communist Manifesto* proves that Marx, that "irate library rat," trapped the reader with "his seductive logic" and could make "pronouncements worthy of the god of vengeance."⁶⁷ How could anyone resist that romantic dream of reason and justice allied with science? What did fatalistic determinism matter when Marx, like Joshua before the walls of Jericho, was proclaiming that victory was imminent?

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 17.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 18.

Yet revolution and victory failed to materialize. What appeared instead was the workers' movement; less apocalyptic, yet still suffused with a romantic spirit in some ways. The workers' movement led to political liberties, social legislation and mass parties, not the Last Judgment of the expropriating revolution. The rise of the trade-union and cooperative movements taught the proletariat that the democratic method worked; it was no longer true that they had nothing to lose but their chains.

The revisionists were a varied group, from Bernstein to Sorel to Jaurès to Croce; what they shared was a psychological bond, a common urge, a single effort to emphasize the role of human will in the Marxist system. But Marxism, insisted Rosselli, was a dogmatic construct; "it cannot tolerate the germ of doubt," and the revisionists ended (like all heretics) in total subversion by questioning the concept of historical materialism itself.⁶⁸ Revisionism rejected determinism and sought to re-insert man back into the center of the historical process. Citing Bernstein, Rosselli insisted that social democracy concern itself with immediate causes, not with ultimate ends and that the movement was everything, the end nothing. Yet by the first years of the twentieth century, the advances made by the revisionists had all been lost; partially because of the hypocrisy and blindness of the revolutionaries and partially because of the weakness of the reformists.

In the third chapter of *Liberal Socialism*, "Marxism and Revisionism in Italy," Rosselli held that Marxism was an artificial, "imported" phenomenon that

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 25.

never really managed to penetrate the socialist movement in Italy. How could it when the very social and economic conditions that Marx held as prerequisites for socialism were lacking? Italy was an overwhelmingly agricultural country, with an enormous rural population, a substantial artisan class and a small proletariat, mostly concentrated in the northern industrial triangle of Genoa-Turin-Milan. As Rosselli so tellingly reminds us, for Italy the problem was not so much to convert to socialism; it was to launch the process of development toward capitalism and modern life.⁶⁹ What could be further apart than rural Italy and a Marxism which embodied historical materialism, Germanic discipline, Bentham and Riccardo, Feuerbach and Hegel, the industrialization of Victorian England, and classical economics and the utilitarian calculus? Small wonder then that in southern Italy, Bakunin was more popular than Marx in the second half of the nineteenth century. Italian socialism was consequently trapped between its own rhetoric and the realities of Italian life; there had always been a lack of correspondence between its theory and practice, between its programs and action. The result was a "feeble and analytical style of reformism that was vitiated by a paternalistic conception of the state."⁷⁰

The socialist tradition in Italy was nothing if not eclectic. Mazzini and Garibaldi were both claimed by the socialists as ancestors; Cattaneo had developed a federalist republicanism, while the "tenuous, noble vein of Malonian socialism"

⁶⁹Ibid. p. 33.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 33.

failed to attract the masses.⁷¹ Much of the socialist propaganda was based on what Rosselli considered its "Achilles' heel:" "catastrophism," or the vision of increasing concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands accompanied by increasing misery for the proletariat, culminating in an explosive revolution. Still, during the first years of the twentieth century, socialism made great strides: Turati, who had once been condemned to prison for fourteen years, found himself being urged to assume power; Andrea Costa, from being a habitué of holding cells, was promoted to vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies.⁷²

Croce, Bernstein and Sorel were the three thinkers most responsible for the diffusion of Marxism in Italy. Croce's experience was typical for many of his generation: a brief but intense immersion in Marxism, then a gradual recognition of its limitations.⁷³ For Rosselli, all the revisionists, from Bissolati and Bonomi to Salvemini and Leone, Loria and Ferri were eclipsed by Rodolfo Mondolfo whose exegesis of Marx provides "the best, and in fact the only, vehicle of

⁷¹Carlo Cattaneo's federalist republicanism culminated in the idea of a "United States of Italy within the United States of Europe;" see his collected essays in *Opere scelte*, 4 vols., ed. D. Castelnovo Frigessi, Turin: Einaudi, 1973. Benoît Malon (1841-1983) abandoned Marx's International for Bakunin's Alliance for Socialist Democracy and had a great influence on the early development of socialism in Italy through his friendships with Filippo Turati and Andrea Costa. Cfr. Vincent K. Steven, *Between Marxism and Anarchism: Benoît Malon and French Reformist Socialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

⁷²Andrea Costa (1851-1910), the most prominent of anarchists to convert to the socialist cause, maintained a faith in radical democracy and collectivism. Although he joined the PSI in 1882, he never considered himself a Marxist.

⁷³Croce wrote of the impact of Marxism in Italy and the common experience of conversion and disillusion in his *Storia d'Italia dal 1871 al 1915*, first published in 1928, in English as *A History of Italy, 1871-1915*, trans. Cecilia M. Ady, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929, pp. 145-62. Croce's essay on Marxism are translated into English as *Historical Materialism and the Economics of Karl Marx*, trans. Michael Curtis, New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1981.

Marxist education for the rising generation in Italy. "⁷⁴ Mondolfo, Rosselli wrote in a passage that echoes with the insights of the philosopher Giambattista Vico, discerned that

The relation between man and his historical-social environment...is not a relation between two things each external to the other, but a relation of action and reaction, a dialectic relation within a single reality. The subject knows the object inasmuch as he produces it; the subject is social man, who, driven by his needs, by his perpetual dissatisfaction with the reality in which he lives, strives to alter the previously existing forms and social relations. It is in this striving, and thanks alone to this striving, that he gains consciousness of reality and its inadequacy. In order to interpret the world, as Marx said in one of his theses on Feuerbach, it is necessary to change it.⁷⁵

The Neapolitan philosopher Antonio Labriola was instrumental in the diffusion of historical materialism in Italy, but warned against considering that conception as some "handy talisman." In language similar to Gramsci's, he insisted that:

The economic substructure, the determinant of all other social phenomena, was not a simple mechanism from which institutions, laws, customs, and ideologies emerged as immediate mechanical effects. Labriola showed that the process of mediation was extremely complicated, often subtle and tortuous, and not always decipherable.⁷⁶

In fact, by 1908, the critical spirit of Marxism and revisionism had been spent:

"In less than twenty years, socialism went from the thunderous revelations of Marx to a chorus of monotonous and repetitious followers...The living word had

⁷⁴*Liberal Socialism*, p. 44. For Mondolfo see his *Mazzini e Marx*, Milan: Critica Sociale, 1972; *Umanesimo di Marx*, Turin: Einaudi, 1968, and *Sulle orme di Marx*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1948.

⁷⁵*Liberal Socialism*, p. 45.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

been transformed into a dead letter, faith into a rite, the rebel into a priest." The "war generation" was idealistic, voluntaristic and pragmatic; it did not and could not understand the materialistic, positivistic, pseudo-scientific language of their elders.⁷⁷

One of the few in the socialist camp who acknowledged this crisis was Benito Mussolini. An "adventurer in the world of culture as he was in that of politics," Mussolini had "no honest intellectual concern," only his own ambition. Yet he recognized that the old socialist position no longer fulfilled the longing of the younger generation and claimed to revitalize Italian political life with an infusion of idealism and pragmatic, Bergsonian voluntarism. Mussolini's victory was facilitated by the "constitutional incapacity" of the old party to renew itself. The few correct diagnoses, such as appeared in Salvemini's *L'Unità* were ignored or suppressed.⁷⁸ Rosselli was not subtle in his criticism: "The truth is that in the years leading up to the war, Italian socialism was intellectually dead. If it felt any stimulus at all, it must have been the drive to self-destruction...The war swept over this fragile intellectual edifice like an avalanche."⁷⁹ The older tradition of reformist socialism was lost in the febrile post-war period "with its spinning vortex of new experiments." What was needed was a

rude intellectual shock to dislodge the Italian socialists from their

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 48-50.

⁷⁸On Salvemini's paper and its influence, cfr. *"L'Unità" di Gaetano Salvemini*, ed. Beniamino Finochiaro, Venice: Pozza, 1958.

⁷⁹*Liberal Socialism*, p. 53.

ideological passivity, to force them to think for themselves, and to achieve, through the hard personal travail of search, of doubt, of conflict, new values to take the place of blind faith in the thaumaturgic virtues of Marxist-materialist nostrums.⁸⁰

Clearly, Rosselli intended that *Liberal Socialism* would be that "rude intellectual shock."

Italian socialists were either unable or unwilling to pursue the process of revision to its logical conclusion--the break between socialism and Marxism. For Rosselli, there were two consequences of the revisionist critique of Marxism; the first paradoxical, the second pragmatic: 1) that one could be a Marxist without being a socialist; and 2) socialists who still believe that they can find a guiding principle in Marxism or concrete guidance for the socialist movement are fooling themselves.⁸¹ The revisionists had claimed an original, fundamental nucleus in Marxism--the theory of historical materialism. Its application to the study of capitalist society would reveal the objective prediction of the inevitability of a socialist future. If the premise--historical materialism--proved shaky, then the entire socialist edifice of Marxism would collapse; and collapse it did, according to Rosselli: "today...in light of all the transformations that have taken place, it can no longer withstand close scrutiny...the relation between historical materialism and socialism had been turned upside down. That which had previously constituted a necessary conclusion now became a contingent premise."⁸² If one wished to tie

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 53.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 56.

⁸²Ibid., p. 57.

the philosophical theory of historical materialism to a practical program, the revisionist interpretation led not to socialism but to liberalism. From Marxism, the road led to revisionism and from revisionism to liberalism. This progression for Rosselli was "inevitable."⁸³ In fact, Rosselli was prepared to make the paradoxical claim that historical materialism is a philosophy much better suited to the capitalist class than the proletariat.

The capitalist, particularly the entrepreneur, being in charge of the production process...possesses an awareness of his active participation in the transformation of the process of production. He is able to concretely insert his will into history, and his relation to economic life is typically one of action-reaction. The proletarian (and the intellectual who joins the cause of the workers on his behalf), however, since he only feels the effects or is forced to assist passively in the process of production, sees the forces of production merely as controlling factors against which, at present, he is powerless to act.⁸⁴

The fetishization of Marxist tenets like historical materialism and the theory of surplus value only acted as handicaps for the workers' movement. When fascism took to the streets, the socialists were unable to respond:

In Italy the common dwelling was on fire, the flames from the houses of the workers were turning the sky red, and the inhabitants--the socialists--were squabbling among themselves about whether it really was a fire, what had caused it, whether it fell into this or that category, whether it had been foretold in the sacred books, whether it was burning only in Italy, and so on.⁸⁵

The fascist onslaught, combined with the erosion of two fundamental myths, spelled the defeat of Marxism. Those two myths, the basis of all Marxist propaganda and the reasons for its success were 1) that the advent of communism

⁸³Ibid., p. 59.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 61.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 62.

was an inevitable outcome of the development of industrial capitalism and 2) that communism was the only social system that could guarantee, through the rational ordering of production and distribution, an immense increase in productivity and well-being, freeing mankind from enslavement to material need. Marx's error was to have mistaken the prologue for the entire course of development, to have given transitory phenomena long temporal duration.⁸⁶ Capitalism had discovered ways to reform itself and attenuate the worst features of the system. England, the birthplace of the industrial revolution and "the Mecca of individualistic libertarianism," was an illuminating example with a wide range of social services and a mixture of nationalized or state-controlled enterprises. Communism was not the only social and economic system that could lay claim to rational planning. "In America especially, the process of economic rationalization has assumed such a rapid pace in recent years that it has eliminated the worst effects of unrestrained competition and fragmentation, realizing an extremely high level of productivity...The social revolution exploded in the most backward country, Russia; while the most developed country, the United States, survived the crisis with the least turmoil."⁸⁷

In an imaginary debate between Marx and a cotton spinner from Lancashire or a cauldron producer from Birmingham, Rosselli held that Marx,

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 64-66.

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 66-67. Rosselli was not blind to the negative aspects of the American economy. See for example his review of Henry Ford's memoirs in "Le memorie di Henry Ford," in *La Riforma sociale*, XXXII, September-October 1925, pp. 451-69.

ahead of his time and feeling the direction of economic progress, would certainly have won. But in a debate between an orthodox Marxist and Ford, the American industrialist would point to the unprecedented productivity while the Marxist would make

moral denunciations, defend qualitative values, moral factors, the rights of the workers to autonomy, against the appalling uniformity and levelling discipline of standardized production. In a word, he has to become liberal and resuscitate the old formulas of utopian socialism and libertarian revolt. There really is no end to the irony of history!⁸⁸

If Marxism has been superseded by the intervening events, what then, is to be the role of Marxism in twentieth century Europe? Rosselli attempts an answer in his chapter "Overcoming Marxism:"

...I really do not mean to imply that nothing living or profound remains in his thought; quite the contrary. No one dreams of proposing a total (and totally absurd) denial of Marx...The son emancipates himself, but he cannot deny his father...today it is impossible to conceive of a modern individual, one endowed, that is, with a strong awareness of the problems of his time, who is not, within certain limits, a Marxist--meaning someone who has not incorporated into his being a whole ensemble of truths that, though they might with good reason have appeared revolutionary in Marx's time, have been comprehended by modern systems of knowledge and modern consciousness to such an extent that they have become almost banal.⁸⁹

Marx's real triumph lies precisely in the fact that his thought has permeated all of modern social science; even his fiercest enemies are students of his work. In the social sciences, he occupies a position similar to Kant's in philosophy. The task for modern socialists is not to deny Marx, but to emancipate themselves from his thought.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 68.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 71.

In his critique of Marxism, Rosselli also revealed his skepticism concerning the masses.

Marxism was the proper doctrine and pedagogy for the proletariat in its infancy, when the *porro unum et necessarium* consisted of awakening the brutalized and derelict masses...The crowd, virgin and rebellious, has two faces, indistinct religiosity and material appetite, which find a perfect correlative in Marx's doctrine: on one hand a mythic, apocalyptic vision, including a glimpse of a happy and rich society, without struggle and without history; on the other hand the brutal realism of his approach, the relentlessly negative critique of a world already marked by fate.⁹⁰

Marxism ascribes "attributes of divinity" to the proletariat, making it the "bearer of all the purest virtues."

Rousseau's man in the "state of nature" became, in the nineteenth century, Mazzini's *popolo* and Marx's "proletariat." The "proletariat" has risen to the rank of a philosophical category; history has become an epic poem in which the proletarian hero defeats the bourgeois monster...⁹¹

The socialist movement needs to return to its ethical roots, when political action was inspired by the flame of moral indignation and outrage. Positivism and the obsession with proving itself to be "scientific" had robbed socialism of this impetus. The socialists must not be afraid of a "free, noble and frank reaffirmation" of idealism. For, in the end, socialism was an ethical ideal:

Socialism is not socialization; it is not the proletariat in power; it is not even material equality. Socialism, grasped in its essential aspect, is the progressive actualization of the idea of liberty and justice among men: an innate idea that lies more or less buried under the sediment of centuries in the marrow of every human being. It is the progressive effort to ensure an equal chance of living the only life worthy of the name to all humans, setting them free from the enslavement to the material world and material needs that today still dominate the greater number, allowing them the possibility freely to develop their personalities

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 74.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 77.

in a continuous struggle for perfection against their primitive and bestial instincts and against the corruptions of a civilization too much prey of the demons of success and money.⁹²

Rosselli freely admitted that the phrase "liberal socialism" sounded paradoxical, but that it was not an oxymoron. He had no intention of introducing a new political terminology, but of bringing socialism back to its "first principles, to its historical and psychological origins," and to demonstrate that "socialism, in the last analysis, is the philosophy of liberty."⁹³

The modern economy, with its mechanized, rationalized and technocratic character that sacrifices the personality of the worker, forces socialists to become liberals in the sense that they must now defend the autonomy of the individual. Specifically, Rosselli defined liberalism as the political theory that "takes the inner freedom of the human spirit as a given and adopts liberty as the ultimate goal, but also the ultimate means, the ultimate rule, of shared human life." Liberalism is not a natural law, nor a fact of nature; rather, it is an historical and social product--a continual "becoming." Individuals are not born free, they become free and remain so by retaining an active and vigilant sense of their autonomy, by constantly exercising their freedoms.⁹⁴ Echoing a sentiment common since the eighteenth century, Rosselli held that liberalism was based on a faith in man, in his potential for perfectibility and capacity for self-determination. All men, he

⁹²Ibid., p. 78.

⁹³Ibid., p. 84.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 85.

felt, had an innate sense of justice.

Liberalism was the creation of modern critical thought, arising from the Reformation and the futility of the wars of religion. It flowered during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through the influence of the scientific revolution and the cultural ascendancy of the bourgeoisie. With the publication of the *Encyclopédie* and the French Revolution, the bourgeoisie had cemented its intellectual and political domination. Since then, liberalism had been transformed from a universal prerogative which in reality corresponded to the interests of a minority, into the patrimony of all.

Socialism is nothing more than the logical development, taken to its extreme consequences, of the principle of liberty. Socialism...as the concrete movement for the emancipation of the proletariat, is liberalism in action; it means that liberty comes into the life of poor people.⁹⁵

The formal granting of liberty may signify an important development in the evolution of political theory, but the great majority are unable, because of material want and economic necessity, to exercise those freedoms. Socialism insists that material want and economic necessity be overcome so that all may benefit from liberalism. Or, as Rosselli wrote,

Liberty without the accompaniment and support of a minimum of economic autonomy, without emancipation from the grip of pressing material necessity, does not exist for the individual; it is a mere phantasm. In these circumstances, the individual is enslaved by poverty, humiliated by his own subjection...Free in law, he is in fact a slave.⁹⁶

The bourgeoisie had once been the standard-bearer of the idea of liberty; it no

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 86.

⁹⁶Ibid.

longer carried that standard. The bourgeoisie now uses liberalism, along with an array of economic, juridical and social principles, to safeguard its privileges from the masses and halt historical progress. But liberalism is by definition historicist, dialectical and relativist; it sees history as a perpetual flux, an eternal becoming and overcoming. It is the socialist movement that now seeks to carry "the dynamic idea of liberty forward through the vicissitudes of history toward its actualization." Hence, it is the true heir of liberalism.⁹⁷ Still, there is a fundamental difference between the liberalism of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat. For the bourgeoisie, "the conquest of political liberty was the sublimation and fulfillment of its own power," while for the proletariat the demand and achievement of political freedom are the commencement of the struggle for economic emancipation.

Political and economic freedom are by no means assured by the historical process. The liberal socialist is therefore in a position of doubt, a "virile relativism" that insists on the role of human will and action in history. The liberal socialist is tormented by a "critical demon" that continually forces one to review one's position in the light of experience. Liberalism is to be adopted as a strategy of means and as an end. Following the Sorelian definition of myth, Rosselli admitted that "...our entire program is founded on the myth of liberty..." and recalled that Jean Jaurès had reminded socialists that "one arrives at the ideal only

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 87.

through the real."⁹⁸

The new socialist movement must adopt a principle of broad, intellectual tolerance as a philosophical and cultural attitude. While individuals might strive for a consistency between theory and action, the attempt to impose such a rigid consistency on a broad-based movement can only strangle thought and inhibit political action. Or, as Rosselli warned, "Grief will result from trying to fetter a movement with a development spanning centuries, a movement irrepressibly polyphonic, to a given philosophical creed."⁹⁹ Italian socialism, desperately in need of a dose of realism, was presently incapable of formulating a constructive program. Before all else, the socialists must realize that Italy was a paradoxical country. The home of the Vatican, it still sheltered remnants of its pagan past just below the surface of a baroque catholicism. In truth, there were two Italies: one that was modern, urban and industrialized; the other ancient and rural, still estranged from Western civilization, its people still pristine and enslaved. These people were far removed from the necessary conditions--economic, political, intellectual--of a socialist movement.¹⁰⁰ What little workers' democracy existed

⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 109-10.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁰⁰Nothing could better prove Rosselli's point here than two books: Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, trans. Francis Frenaye, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1947 (written while Levi was hiding from the Nazis in Florence in 1943-1944) and Ignazio Silone's *Fontamara*, trans. Eric Mosbacher, London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1985. (First published in German in Zurich: Nuove Edizione Italiane, 1933). Both works demonstrate that the simple innocence of the people is no match for the "cunning of history." Silone's book garnered an enthusiastic review from Trotsky and Rosselli reviewed it in the *QGL*, n. 9 November 1933, pp. 100-101. He wrote that it was "a beautiful and painful book...a work of art...that reflected humanity...Probably the finest Italian social novel..."

in Italy could be found only in the trade unions; hence, Rosselli was "explicitly in favor of a reorganization of the socialist movement along the lines similar to the Labour Party in Britain..."¹⁰¹

The book ended with a personal and political testament. It is here reproduced in full as it does not appear in the English translation. It contains, in as succinct a form as possible, the ideas developed in *Liberal Socialism* and later in exile.

My Reckoning with Marxism¹⁰²

I undertake this reckoning after several years under the escort of many enemies and doctrinal police, in the company of a few heretical friends. I want to make them known first of all to myself, and then to my comrades of destiny that do not believe that the borders of the world end at the Alps.

I will be clear, simple, sincere, and since I am lacking books, I will proceed without the famous "professional apparatus" and the no less famous "assistance of notes."

Who am I?

I am a socialist.

A socialist that, despite being declared dead for a while, still feels the blood circulating in his arteries and flowing in his brain. A socialist who cannot be dismissed with the criticism of the old programs nor with the memory of defeat, nor with the responsibility of the past, nor with the polemics of the war that was fought. A young socialist, a new and dangerous brand, who has studied, suffered, meditated and understood something of past and recent Italian history. And has understood precisely:

- I. That socialism is firstly a moral revolution and secondly a material revolution.
- II. That as such, it is realized today in the consciences of the best, without having to wait for the future.

¹⁰¹*Liberal Socialism*, p. 127.

¹⁰²"I miei conti col marxismo," appendix to *Socialismo liberale*, in *Opere scelte di Carlo Rosselli*, vol. I, pp. 486-87; and *Socialismo liberale*, 1979, pp. 143-44.

- III. That there is no necessary relationship between socialism and Marxism.
- IV. That instead, in our day, the Marxist philosophy threatens to compromise the advance of socialism.
- V. That socialism without democracy is like wanting the barrel full and a drunk wife.¹⁰³
- VI. That socialism, inasmuch as it is the dynamic standard-bearer of the more numerous, miserable, oppressed class, is the heir of liberalism.
- VII. That liberty, presupposition of the moral life as much in the individual as in the collective, is the most effective means and the final end of socialism.
- VIII. That socialization, even if extremely important, is not an end but a means.
- IX. That the specter of violent social revolution now only frightens sparrows and serves the cause of reaction.
- X. That socialism is not declared from above, but is built everyday from below, in the consciences of people, in the unions, in culture.
- XI. That it needs a few, clear ideas, new people and the love of concrete problems.
- XII. That the new Italian socialist movement does not have to be the fruit of the glueing together of large and small parties that are buried, but a new organism from head to toe, a federative synthesis of all the forces that struggle for the cause of liberty and labor.
- XIII. That it is absurd to impose a single philosophy, a single model, a single intellectual standard on such a large mass movement.

The first liberalism must be effected from within.

There are thirteen theses.
Thirteen brings good luck.
Whoever lives will see.

¹⁰³"La botta piena e la moglie ubriaca" is an Italian proverb. Rosselli added his own footnote here: "Socialism without democracy means inevitable dictatorship, and dictatorship means servile men, numbers and not consciences, products and not producers, and means therefore the negation of the ends of socialism."

CHAPTER V

GIUSTIZIA E LIBERTÀ

Heresy is the lifeblood of religions. It is faith that begets heretics.
There are no heresies in a dead religion.

André Suarès
Péguy (1915)

The only serious way to be antifascist is to be heretical...

Carlo Rosselli
"Il neo-socialismo francese" (1933)

The flight from Lipari took the refugees to Cap Bon in Tunisia, then Corsica, Marseilles and finally the large exile community in Paris.¹ Rosselli arrived in the French capital on 1 August² and immediately set about trying to

¹Rosselli found an apartment at 6, Rue des Marronniers, close to Salvemini; later when Marion and "Mirtillino" arrived and little Amelia on the way, they moved to 5, Place du Pantheon and finally to 79, Rue Notre Dame des Champs. For the history of the Italian community in Paris from the first world war to the fall of France, see *Les italiens en France de 1914 a 1940*, Pierre Milza, ed. Rome: Collection de l'école française, 1986. An early work was Pietro Montasini, *L'organisation des antifascistes italiennes a l'étranger*, Paris: Edizioni di Giustizia e Libertà, 1929.

²His telegram to Marion was intercepted by the fascist police and is now in the ACS, Busta 4221, fascicolo 2.

formulate a new antifascist organization.³ Yet his escape had unforeseen repercussions. Marion, pregnant with their second child,⁴ was arrested in retaliation for Carlo's audacious gesture against the regime. From Paris, Rosselli organized a concerted, international campaign to secure her release. In a letter to Alberto Tarchiani, he mentioned that along with Turati and others, "we are beginning to unfold the plan for a journalistic offensive. We will make the big Anglo-Saxon guns move quickly and those that are capable of putting the bite on the beast."⁵ Carlo's father-in-law met with the English Ambassador, a "rain" of letters from England reached Marion in prison and Nitti wrote directly to Lloyd George. The international furor that ensued forced the regime to release Marion--an English citizen--within a few days. Nello was not as fortunate and was sent to *confino* on the prison island of Ustica. During the month of August, Rosselli was literally besieged by newspaper correspondents from all over the world; in one day, he granted 8 interviews.⁶

³Besides the telegram, Rosselli did not write to his family until 14 August; during those first heady days of freedom, he often gave several interviews a day. The letter, now in the AGL, is reprinted in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 455-59.

⁴Amelia Rosselli was born in 1930 and is now a respected writer and poet in Rome. "I remember my father as a serene, affectionate person and my mother a bit distant, preoccupied...Of my father, apart from affection, there remains a sense of incorporeality. When he left for Spain in 1936 I was six years old, so I don't remember much." "Intervista con Amelia Rosselli," in Amelia Rosselli, *Antologia poetica*, Milan: Garzanti, 1987, p. 149.

⁵Carlo Rosselli to Alberto Tarchiani, letter of 13 August 1929; AGL, sezione II, fascicolo 1, sottofascicolo 51, n. 1. Rosselli's letter to the *Manchester Guardian* protesting the arrest of Marion is now in the BNF, FR, cassetta 1, inserto IV, n. 1.

⁶See the long postscript to Rosselli's letter to Tarchiani, AGL, sezione II, fascicolo 1, sottofascicolo 51, n. 1. Among the newspapers that carried the story of the escape from Lipari were *The New York Times*, *The New York Herald*, *The Chicago Times in America*; *The Daily Chronicle*, *The Daily Express* and *The Daily News* of England; the *Volkische Zeitung* of Berlin;

In an interview with a correspondent of *L'Italia del popolo*, a bi-weekly journal published in Paris,⁷ he outlined, *in nuce*, the conceptions and ideals developed since *Quarto Stato* and further refined on Lipari. He stressed his belief in voluntarism and that the work of liberation could not wait for some *deus ex machina*, but had to be the work of Italians themselves. Again, he returned to his critique of the petrified orthodoxy of the socialists and Marxists: "The preoccupation to insert oneself in History with a capital H, to fix with perfect exactitude the civil state of one's time, to navigate along the course indicated by the Marxist compass, sometimes reduces even the most worthy to impotence... The man of action must, especially in certain moments, renounce being a historian of himself and his action." This was not to say that Rosselli glorified action for action's sake: "I hate blind action, brute action, action that is not supported by reason and not illuminated by moral light. I would not wish, in criticizing cerebralism and academicism, to fall into the contrary excess." For Rosselli, the motto to keep in mind was Mazzini's *pensiero e azione* (thought and action). Antifascism was not a mechanical problem of simply overturning the fascist dictatorship. Action had to be accompanied by "a perfect ideological clarity." When the interviewer described Rosselli as "among those young socialists who perhaps more than any other defended the necessity of a profound revision of the theoretical and practical positions of the socialist movement," Rosselli responded

La Prensa of Buenos Aires and numerous others.

⁷Interview, *L'Italia del popolo*, *bollettino quindicinale della Federazione dei repubblicani italiani residenti in Europa* IV, n. 11, 30 September 1929; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 3-9.

that if anything, he was more convinced than ever of the necessity of undertaking a "courageous examination of conscience."⁸

Rosselli wanted to be absolutely clear about what he meant by the "overcoming of Marxism;" for him there was a fundamental difference between Marx the sociologist and Marx the theorist of the socialist movement. "The first, with his potent realism, is immortal and has permeated all of modern social science; so penetrated that he can claim to count among his students his own most acrimonious adversaries...No one can dream of a total negation of Marx...I hold instead to a virile and liberating emancipation...The Marx that has been superseded is the theoretical and prophetic Marx...his position is one of departure, certainly not of arrival."

Finally, the interview turned to the question of the relationship between socialism and liberalism, which Rosselli called, "the essential theme of my book." Liberty contains the final end of socialism; freedom was both a means and an end. "Marxism regards liberty as a relative and historical value, exchanging its eternal and immutable essence with its transcendent manifestations...the problem of liberty only existed in the relation of man's subjection to economics." The essential goal was a new conception of liberty: full, effective, positive, for all human beings, in all aspects of existence. Political and spiritual liberty was necessary as the premise for the struggle for economic autonomy in the future. "Our position is nothing less than the logical development, until its ultimate

⁸*Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 5-6.

consequences, of the principle of freedom."⁹

Cobbling together an alliance of liberals, Mazzinian republicans and other democratic socialists, Rosselli was the driving force behind the creation of *Giustizia e Libertà*.¹⁰ Present at the meeting in the house of Alberto Tarchiani¹¹ were the three escapees Rosselli, Emilio Lussu, and Francesco Fausto Nitti; joining them were Alberto Cianca, Gaetano Salvemini, Cipriano Facchinetti and Raffaele Rossetti. The activists that gravitated toward the new movement included the Roman journalist Alberto Cianca, instrumental in reviving the satirical journal *Il Becco Giallo* when he arrived in Paris in January 1927. Vincenzino Nitti, eldest son of the former prime minister, lent his support, as well as those involved in the first attempt to rescue Rosselli from Lipari, Facchinetti and Rossetti. It was said to be Nello Rosselli who suggested the name "*Giustizia e Libertà*," with its *Risorgimento* overtones, from poetry by Carducci.¹²

"After three years of relative impotence," Carlo wrote, "I am full of energy...We will work--we will be victorious, even if the struggle takes another

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Carlo Francovich, "Dall'interventismo democratico a *Giustizia e Libertà*," in *Quaderni del Circolo Rosselli*, XI, n. 1, January 1991, pp. 80-84; Ferruccio Parri, "Nascita di *Giustizia e Libertà*," in *Il Ponte* XIII, n. 6 June 1957; pp. 859-61. For a discussion of the various ideological currents that coalesced in *Giustizia e Libertà*, see Frank Rosengarten, *Silvio Trentin: Dall'interventismo alla Resistenza*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1980, pp. 112-18.

¹¹For Tarchiani's account see his Introduction to the reprint publication of *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1975, pp. 1-18. I am indebted to Professor Frank Rosengarten who graciously lent me his collection of the *Quaderni*.

¹²The words appear in two poems: *Dopo Aspromonte* ("sole nel mondo regnino giustizia e libertade") and *Ode a Victor Hugo* ("Canta la nuova prole, o vegliardo divino/il carne secolare del popolo latino;/canta a'l mondo/aspettante giustizia e libertà").

twenty years and demands the greatest sacrifices, life only has meaning if conceived this way."¹³ By October 1929, *Giustizia e Libertà* was organizing centers in Italy and Rosselli left his imprint on the movement from its birth.¹⁴ It was to be a socialist-republican coalition that would attract and synthesize the most vital and activist currents among the antifascist exile intelligentsia. Its relationship with the older parties was ambiguous: some within the movement sought a possible renewal of the PSI and possibly an eventual integration of forces; on the other hand, Rosselli was to insist that *Giustizia e Libertà* was unlike the older, more established parties. It was born in the crucible of fascism and therefore its essence was antifascism. Rosselli's critique of the older parties was the premise for insisting that GL remain a movement rather than a party. This eventually became the accepted ideological position, and the members of GL, although previously associated with the older parties, decided not to take out any party cards. This was to be an essential characteristic of the movement: it allowed for an independence that was rare and could contribute to a free discussion of ideology and tactics. The movement named a triumvirate as co-directors: Rosselli, Emilio Lussu and Alberto Tarchiani, representing the socialist, republican and liberal currents respectively.¹⁵

¹³Letter to Bertha Pritchard, 23 August 1929; AGL, sezione I, fascicolo 1, sottofascicolo 94, inserto 1.

¹⁴Riccardo Bauer, "Carlo Rosselli e la nascita di *Giustizia e Libertà*," in *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, pp. 205-15.

¹⁵Garosci, *Vita* I, p. 196.

The group began to implement its ideas immediately: before the end of 1929, the first issue of *Giustizia e Libertà*, a monthly underground publication, was ready to be smuggled into Italy.¹⁶ Its masthead stated that GL was a "Revolutionary Antifascist Movement" and prominently featured quotes from the martyred Amendola ("In the darkest night, dawn is ever closer") and Matteotti ("You may kill me, but the idea that is in me is immortal"). Its first issue declared "We will not win in a day, but we will win" and went on using the language of a manifesto:

Giustizia e Libertà fights for the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship and for the victory of a free, democratic, republican regime.

It acts on revolutionary terrain because the dictatorship has rendered any other form of struggle impossible.

It summons to action all Italians who feel offended in their dignity by the present servitude and wish to actively participate in the insurrection.

It affirms that the highest interests of the working classes are at stake in the present battle; because it can realize its ideal of economic and social justice only in a regime that guarantees judicial equality and political liberty.

It affirms that the liberation of Italy must be the work of Italians.

It declares that the battle is extremely difficult and imposes the greatest sacrifices. This is the price for the Second Italian Risorgimento.¹⁷

In a direct criticism of the passivity of the older parties, GL demanded that "We bury the past...we wish to break the spell...either fight or serve cowardly. There is no other way." GL was to be a revolutionary movement, not a party, and

¹⁶The collection of *Giustizia e Libertà* as a monthly is conserved in the AGL, sezione IV, fascicolo 2, sottofascicolo I, inserto 2. I am indebted to Dr. Giovanni Verni and the staff of the ISRT for permission to photocopy these materials.

¹⁷*Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 1, November 1929; AGL, sezione IV, fascicolo 2, sottofascicolo 1, inserto 2, #1.

demanded that Italians abandon the hope for divine intervention and have faith only in themselves. "Fascism holds in its fist weapons and says: 'I discuss only with arms.' It is necessary, therefore, to speak of war. This is the new language we intend to speak." In language immediately accessible to the masses (although not historically accurate) it concluded with the assertion that "Mussolini is Radetzky returned to Milan, the Pope returned to Rome and the Bourbons in Naples."¹⁸

When it became clear that a more detailed program was necessary, Rosselli devoted more time to clarifying the position of the movement. In "Linee essenziali di un programma costruttivo," he focused on the crisis of parliamentary institutions and the character of the fascist dictatorship.¹⁹ In an unsigned and undated document in the Archives of Giustizia e Libertà we read that:

...Giustizia e Libertà, à l'inverse de l'évolution que Péguy considèrait comme tristement fatale, a su remonter d'une politique vers une métaphisique, on n'exagèrait à piene en definissant le véritable but du mouvement auquel Giustizia e Libertà s'efforce de donner une vigoureuse impulsion comme une "réforme intellectuelle et morale" du peuple italien. Et ce serait avec le plus grand bonheur se proposat d'atteindre un résultat analogue dans notre patrie plus vaste, l'Europe.²⁰

Crucial in determining the character of Giustizia e Libertà was Rosselli's highly critical judgement on the passivity of the older political parties. The *raison*

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹"Linee essenziali di un programma costruttivo," in AGL, sezione III, fascicolo 1, n. 6.

²⁰The anonymous, typewritten document bears a striking resemblance to Rosselli's style, especially the reference to Renan's book *La Réforme intellectuelle et morale*, Brussels, Edition Complexe, 1990. AGL, sezione III, fascicolo 1, n. 13.

d'être of the new movement, at least in the early years, was action. Or, as Rosselli put it two years later:

It would have been very easy to launch a detailed program or to engage in a refined labor of political culture; and maybe even more convenient. But they (the founders of GL) thought that, once the fundamental identification of positions was established, it was better to lay the pen aside, and adopt other weapons of battle, calling the dormant to the uprising...A period of theoretical silence, rather than frightening the people, would attract them.²¹

A month before his death, Rosselli recounted the founding principles of the movement:

More than a common program, what tied us together was a state of mind: the revolt against the men, the mentality, the methods of the prefascist political world, responsible for the miserable end of the Aventine Secession; an active will to struggle, which was to be also a redemption of the humiliation of the battle not fought and the undeserved defeat; a conviction that was not clear in its terms but very clear in its motives, of the necessity of a renewal *ab imis* of the social and moral life of the country.²²

It was not until 1932, with the publication of the inaugural issue of *Giustizia e Libertà* as a theoretical journal that the movement clarified its ideas into a coherent and formal program.²³

Rosselli insisted that although *Giustizia e Libertà* was founded in Paris, the real work had to be carried out in Italy. Accordingly, groups were established in almost all the larger cities of northern Italy by the end of 1929. Ernesto Rossi and

²¹Quoted in Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 199.

²²"Per l'unificazione del proletariato italiano: V. *Giustizia e Libertà*," in *Giustizia e Libertà*, 14 May 1937; now in *Scritti dell'esilio*, vol. II. p. 531.

²³*Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 1, January 1932; especially the three pieces by Rosselli, "Il programma rivoluzionario di *Giustizia e Libertà*," pp. 1-8; "Chiarimenti al programma," pp. 9-20; and "Liberalismo rivoluzionario," pp. 25-29. The first two are not signed, the last is signed with Rosselli's *nome de plume*, "Curzio."

Riccardo Bauer were given the responsibility of forging these new groups. Bauer was especially successful in Turin, where he gathered together the remnants of Gobetti's *Rivoluzione liberale* circle. The work south of Rome proved to be less successful. In the face of Croce's criticism concerning Rosselli's concept of a "liberal socialism" and "Giustizia e Libertà," only Tommaso Fiore, friend of Salvemini, was able to attract some supporters and maintain contact with Rosselli and the others in Paris. In the United States, antifascist exiles sympathetic to the ideology of Giustizia e Libertà founded the Mazzini Society in New York and published the *Quaderni Italiani*.²⁴

An important aspect of Giustizia e Libertà was the smuggling of antifascist writings back into Italy. Nello Traquandi, employed by the Italian postal system, was instrumental in this regard. He established an intricate web of contacts and postal workers across northern Italy in order to elude the censors. Every nucleus of Giustizia e Libertà in each city had couriers who crossed the Italo-French border and returned with numerous documents and propaganda.²⁵ Subterfuge was refined as when the first issue of *Giustizia e Libertà* first appeared, it carried "Rome, November 1929" on its first page, although it was printed neither in Rome (but rather in Paris) nor in November. In this way, the movement sent the

²⁴Documents of the Mazzini Society are preserved in the AGL, Fondo "Mazzini Society" and includes letters of Max Ascoli, Lionello Venturi, Gaetano Salvemini, Michele Cantarella, Alberto Tarchiani and others. On the resistance to fascism in America, see John Patrick Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View From America*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972, pp. 344-45, 406-18; and his essay "The Italo-American Anti-Fascist Opposition," in *Journal of American History* 54, December 1967, pp. 579-98.

²⁵Garosci, *Vita I*, pp. 205-206.

fascist police off on false leads, while protecting their couriers and distribution networks. Another tactic was to camouflage the publications of *Giustizia e Libertà* within the covers of "respected" publications like the philosophical works of Croce or Gentile.²⁶

The most comprehensive expression of the movement's methods were published by Ernesto Rossi and Riccardo Bauer in the eighteenth edition of *Giustizia e Libertà* in the summer of 1930.²⁷ In fact, the edition was so popular that a second edition was published a year later; it was, in Garosci's opinion, perhaps the best and the most original and certainly the most read of the various works of the early movement.²⁸ Rossi and Bauer were explicit in the immediate objectives of the new organization: 1) what they called "the passive resistance" i.e: to create around the fascists an ambience of hostility in which they would feel isolated, scorned, hated, without being able to identify their enemies. This was to be a silent, diffused hostility which would discouraged, demoralize and disorient the fascists; and 2) the "revolutionary organization" which would forge in every important city a nucleus of several dozen men and women, belonging to all the social classes and all political currents fighting against the dictatorship.²⁹

²⁶Croce's *Estetica, teoria e storia*, was used to cover issues 1-6 of the *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*; his *Filosofia della pratica. Economia ed etica* was used to hide the same issues; the second volume of Meinecke's *Cosmopolitismo e stato nazionale* contained the first six issues of the *Quaderni*. AGL, sezione IV, fascicolo 7, n. 1-7.

²⁷"Consigli sulla tattica," *Giustizia e Libertà* (monthly), n. 18, n.d. (but Summer 1930). AGL, sezione IV, fascicolo 2, sottofascicolo 1, inserto 2, #2.

²⁸Garosci, *Vita* I, p. 206.

²⁹"Consigli sulla tattica," in *Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 18.

The authors were eager to dispel the notion that the active resistance was privileged over the passive (as could be inferred from Rosselli's writings). Not all could be fighters on the front lines, but all could contribute to the antifascist cause. (This could have been the position of those university professors who were personally against fascism, but took the oath of allegiance to the regime in order to safeguard their jobs.) Possible modes of passive resistance included boycotting visits of the King or Mussolini (as was successful in Florence with the directives of *Non Mollare!*). Also, citizens should resist the temptations offered by the regime, particularly the Dopolavoro, which organized excursions in the countryside, pilgrimages, sporting events and the like. *Giustizia e Libertà* was highly conscious of the fact that the regime was attempting to forge a "consensus" and "hegemony" over the people, long before those words worked their way into our political vocabulary.³⁰ Those that were obligated to attend fascist functions were advised to arrive late and not applaud; all were encouraged to stop smoking to decrease the fascist regime's revenues from the tobacco tax; boycott fascist stores and refuse to employ militant fascists. Others could help by distributing the clandestine publications or even lending the technology necessary to continue the

³⁰The controversy over "consensus," stimulated by Renzo De Felice's massive biography of Mussolini (especially the volume *Mussolini il Duce, I: Gli anni del consenso, 1929-1936*, Turin: Einaudi, 1974) has generated important works; see Philip V. Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso: Fascismo e mass media*, Bari: Laterza, 1975; Victoria De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization and Leisure in Fascist Italy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. On "hegemony" see Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971; Joseph V. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process*, Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1987; esp. chpt. 2 "The Concept of Hegemony."

clandestine writing; those that could were urged to assist the movement financially. Even the writing of graffiti such as "Viva Giustizia e Libertà!" if undertaken on a grand scale, could have an impact.

It should be noted here that Rosselli's brother, Nello, after the brief experience of *Non Mollare!*, became an intellectual of the passive resistance. In his scholarly work, he clearly sympathized with the liberal and radical currents in modern Italian history.³¹

As could be expected though, Rossi and Bauer were more explicit concerning the tactics of the "revolutionary organization" or active resistance. Although conceding that the various cells in different cities would be composed of varying political currents and therefore have different characteristics, there were some tactics that all could agree upon as developed by the Central Committee of Giustizia e Libertà which would give general directives and coordinate the diverse initiatives. These included:

- a) remain united in a **continuous** labor among those who are capable of assuming the responsibilities and have the capacity of revolutionary work;
- b) strongly cultivate the distribution of the clandestine press;
- c) establish from each member the amount he is able to pay each month and that which he is able to collect from friends; monthly dues are not only necessary to carry out clandestine work, but also to gauge the enthusiasm of the adherents;
- d) try to make the movement known in the military; distribute the publications in the barracks; make contact with those in telegraph offices, postal stations, railway workers, telephone operators, etc.; create cells of Giustizia e Libertà in universities and schools, sporting clubs, and above

³¹Nello Rosselli, *Mazzini e Bakunin: 12 anni di movimento operaio in Italia, 1860-1872*. Turin: Einaudi, 1927; *Carlo Pisacane nel Risorgimento italiano*. Genoa: Orfini, 1936; *Saggi sul Risorgimento e altri saggi*. Turin: Einaudi, 1946; *Nello Rosselli, uno storico sotto il fascismo: lettere e scritti vari (1927-1937)*, ed. Zeffirio Ciuffoletti. Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1979.

- all the factories;
- e) be always conscious of a sort of balance between the human and material resources available to us; ascertain whether a member is a veteran, possesses arms and is able to use them, or owns an automobile; above all do not believe in those groups that hold themselves ready for decisive political action, but decline to assist us in small ways: those that do not wish to contribute money, nor distribute the press, nor do they manifest any other practical mode of action their revolutionary will, do not count, even if they say they are animated by the best of intentions;
- f) advise members how to act when arrested; deny everything if possible; do not be fooled by false confessions; if brought before the Tribunale Speciale, reveal during the proceedings your membership in Giustizia e Libertà.
- g) spread the idea that the date of the revolution is not found printed on the calendar, nor can it be pre-established; in other words, beware of false prophets and immature uprisings;
- h) understand and accept that your life is at risk.

The second edition of "Consigli sulla tattica," published a year later in 1931 added fourteen tactics, including the advice not to be too critical and to be aware, but not paralyzed, by the omnipresence of police spies. This was in response to the arrest of Rossi and Bauer. Both were tried before the Tribunale Speciale and sentenced to 20 years in prison. It was the first of many severe blows to the movement. Also, almost immediately after the founding of Giustizia e Libertà, the "Menapace affair" exploded. Ermanno Menapace (whose last name appropriately translates as "intrigue against peace") was an *agent provocateur* paid by the fascist police to infiltrate the antifascist organizations.³² In 1928, he had managed to steal all the documents that were being prepared for a exhibit of the antifascist press to be held in Cologne.³³ He framed the anarchist Camillo Berneri and

³²See his self-serving memoirs, *Tra i fuorusciti*, Paris: Imprimeries General, 1933.

³³"Exposition de la Presse Anti-Fasciste Italienne" was to be held in Cologne in June 1927; see Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 210.

Claudio Cianca, brother of Alberto, in a foolish plot. Menapace had supplied Berneri with a pistol with which the anarchist was supposed to assassinate the fascist Minister of Justice Alfredo Rocco in Brussels. In addition, French police found evidence of the plot in the home of Cianca; subsequently all three were arrested by the French authorities. Cianca was arrested and spent 100 days in prison in France; at his trial, the French prosecutor, although obliged to follow the law, referred to him as "c'est galant homme, c'est gentilhomme." Berneri was sentenced to 5 months in Brussels and Menapace 7 months. In Paris, Berneri was sentenced to 6 months *in absentia* and Menapace 2 years *in absentia*. Because of Cianca's association with Giustizia e Libertà, Rosselli, Lussu and Tarchiani were all temporarily expelled from France. Although merely a *pro forma* exercise, it was an exile within an exile.

The early development of Giustizia e Libertà was characterized by an incessant desire for action, toward some concrete political gesture which would put the lie to Mussolini's claim to consensus. But this is not to say that Rosselli neglected the theoretical framework for political action.

Giustizia e Libertà was created in the midst of an exile community in Paris.³⁴ As early as 1922, Italian socialists had fled to the French capital and had

³⁴For a bibliography of the works of Italian political exiles during the fascist era, see Gastone Silvano Spinetti, *Bibliografia degli esuli politici sotto il fascismo*, Rome: Edizioni di Solidarismo, 1959; more recent works on antifascism in exile are Marina Tesoro and Elisa Signori, *Antifascismo in esilio: fra repubblicanismo e socialismo*, Florence: Le Monnier, 1987; Simonetta Tombaccini, *Storia dei fuorusciti italiani in Francia*, Milan: Mursia, 1988.

developed a tightly-knit community, although not without internal disputes. This emigrant group expanded in 1925-26, when the fascist regime unleashed a concerted effort against its enemies.³⁵ Paris was home to Italian communists, revolutionary and reformist socialists, anarchists, Mazzinian republicans, radical democrats, and even dissident fascists.

Also in Paris was LIDU, whose president, the photographer Giovanni Bassanesi, would figure in an important episode in the history of *Giustizia e Libertà*. In a way, Bassanesi was a typical member of *Giustizia e Libertà*: it would be difficult to pin him down on the political spectrum. An observant Catholic and political liberal, he refused to adopt the informal *tu* commonly used by the exile community and instead insisted on using the more formal *lei* as a form of address.³⁶ In early 1930, Bassanesi developed the idea of a daring mid-day flight over Italy to drop propaganda leaflets.³⁷ He first approached the communists in exile, who were understandably suspicious of him and his plan. Rosselli, though, was captivated by the idea and Alberto Cianca accompanied Bassanesi in a few flying lessons. Unfortunately for Bassanesi, he suffered from unstable nerves and every flight was a torture for him. Yet, he persevered, and

³⁵For an excellent examination of the historical and historiographical problems of this emigration, see Simona Colarizi, "Problemi storiografici sul fuoruscitismo e sull'antifascismo all'estero," in Gaetano Arfè, et. al. *L'emigrazione socialista nella lotta contro il fascismo (1926-1939)*, Florence: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1982.

³⁶Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 212.

³⁷The best study of Bassanesi and the anti-fascist tactic of propaganda flights is Franco Fucci's *Ali contro Mussolini: i raid aerei antifascisti degli anni trenta*, Milan: Mursia, 1978. On the flight and the subsequent trial, see Egidio Reale, "Il volo su Milano," in *No al fascismo*, pp. 159-75.

acquired a grand total of 30 hours of practice before the actual flight. The many logistical problems (the purchase of a plane with Rosselli's money, finding an airfield, printing the manifestoes, etc.) were eventually ironed out, and Gioachino Dolci was selected by Giustizia e Libertà to be the second pilot.³⁸ An airfield was found (or rather created) in Lodrino in the Swiss canton of Ticino, where a large Italian socialist community was eager to assist in the daring enterprise. Rosselli and Tarchiani personally brought the leaflets to the airfield in a small truck. In order to carry as many leaflets as possible (150,000) the two pilots relinquished their parachutes and took off.

A few minutes after noon on 11 July 1930, Bassanesi and Dolci were over Milan, dropping the manifestoes throughout the city, especially in the Piazza Duomo, before the great Gothic cathedral and heart of the city.³⁹ The leaflets urged the people of Italy not to smoke nor pay taxes; another was an appeal to the workers; one simply stated: "Giustizia e Libertà salutes Milan, the City of the Five Glorious Days" [the uprising against the Austrians during the *Risorgimento*]; and in a direct challenge to the fascist regime, proclaimed that "Committees of Giustizia e Libertà have already been formed in thirty cities and are organized and

³⁸For Dolci's account see "Il racconto dell'Osservatore," in *Almanacco Socialista 1931*, Paris: PSI, 1931, pp. 56-62.

³⁹On Milan as a the "capital of anti-fascism," see Giovanni Ferro, *Milano: Capitale dell'antifascismo*, Milan: Mursia, 1985, especially chpt. XIII, "Si costituisce a Milano il movimento Giustizia e Libertà," pp. 91-98 and Enrico De Cleve and Arturo Colombo, "Milano antifascista: dal volo Bassanesi agli arresti di Giustizia e Libertà," in *Nuova Antologia*, vol. 565, n. 2177, January-March 1991, pp. 178-90.

armed for action."⁴⁰

The episode struck Italy like thunder. In the middle of the day, in a great metropolis, the antifascists had impudently dared to show themselves right under the noses (or more accurately, above the noses) of the fascist regime. Mussolini had thundered that he could "darken the skies" with the new fascist air force and that Italy was impervious to attack; here was an inexperienced pilot who managed to circle over Milan undisturbed for nearly half an hour. It was, in a way, a repeat performance of the flight from Lipari. The rhetoric and bombast of the regime had been punctured by courageous action. This was no longer the academic, theoretical side of Italian antifascism; the use of modern technology, the audacity and the daring, captured the imagination of many young Italians. Not surprisingly, new recruits began finding their way to the cells of *Giustizia e Libertà* in Paris and in Italy.

Unfortunately, the flight was not an unmitigated success. On their return, Bassanesi encountered mechanical difficulties and the plane made a forced landing in the Gothard Pass. He was severely injured and was scarred for the rest of his life. He was arrested by the authorities and in November placed on trial in Lugano along with Rosselli, Tarchiani and others charged with complicity. Dolci, for some unknown reason, managed to escape arrest; his role was not revealed until after the trial which unfolded over three days--17-19 November 1930. Bassanesi's lawyer, speaking of the flight in the courtroom, poetically defended

⁴⁰Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 214, note 1.

his client by claiming that "Freedom, banished from the earth, descends from the sky."⁴¹ As in Savona, this was an opportunity for the antifascists to make their case in a neutral environment.⁴² It soon became apparent that like Savona, it was not Bassanesi and the others on trial but Mussolini and the fascist regime. Filippo Turati and former Foreign Minister Carlo Sforza arrived to testify on Bassanesi's behalf. Newspaper correspondents from all over Europe attended the trial which took place only a few months after another, similar trial in Brussels that tried the Italian anarchist Ferdinando De Rosa for the attempted assassination of Prince Umberto.⁴³

Rosselli, Bassanesi and the others took full advantage of the presence of an international press corps. Their ringing statements often elicited the spontaneous outbreak of cheers and applause. Their letter to the presiding judge was eventually leaked to the press.⁴⁴ Rosselli declared:

We have been in prison in Italy, we are prepared to go to prison in Switzerland, in whatever other country, wherever there is the possibility for us to affirm our faith in a humane and civil manner...The State that we cherish is the state that you Ticinese have given yourselves, the freedom for which we struggle is that which you know and have taught me to love, as a child, when I became enthralled with Tell and scorned in Gessler the tyranny of all ages and all lands.

And perhaps in one of his most poignant and powerful public statements recalled:

⁴¹Fucci, *Ali contro Mussolini*, p. 35.

⁴²The trial is recounted in *Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 22, January 1931; AGL, sezione IV, fascicolo 2, sottofascicolo 1, inserto 2, #14.

⁴³Aldo Garosci, "L'attentato di Bruxelles," in *No al fascismo*, pp. 127-158.

⁴⁴C. Rosselli and A. Tarchiani, letter to On. Motta, BNF, FR, cassetta 1, inserto II, n. 3.

I had a home: they destroyed it. I had a newspaper: they suppressed it. I had a professorship: I had to abandon it. I had, as I still have today, ideas, dignity, an ideal: to defend them I had to go to prison. I had teachers, friends--Amendola, Matteotti, Gobetti--they have killed them.⁴⁵

Bassanesi had undoubtedly committed an infraction against Swiss laws and was sentenced to four months (since he had already been in prison since July, he was immediately released). There was no fine imposed, nor was he expelled; Rosselli, Tarchiani and the others were acquitted.⁴⁶ An explosion of applause erupted in the courtroom and that evening a banquet was held in honor of Bassanesi and Turati. The return rail trip from Lugano to Paris was marked by enthusiastic demonstrations at every station, a sure sign that the trial had profoundly moved the Swiss people.

In December of 1931, Bassanesi attempted a repeat of his historic flight, only to encounter failure. The experiences only exacerbated his already fragile constitution and he soon suffered a nervous breakdown. In 1932, he requested an amnesty from Mussolini's government and was expelled from *Giustizia e Libertà*.⁴⁷

Bassanesi's flight inspired other attempts; almost all ended in failure. The only other expedition which managed to carry out its intention of dropping leaflets was Lauro De Bosis' flight over Rome. Tragically, De Bosis went down

⁴⁵Carlo Rosselli, speech before the Lugano tribunal; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, p. 21.

⁴⁶Fucci, *Ali contro Mussolini*, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 71-72.

somewhere in the Mediterranean Sea on his return.⁴⁸ Sensing the outcome of the endeavor, he left behind a haunting essay, "The Story of My Death," written just before the flight.⁴⁹

Until the flight over Milan, the fascist police had been slow in moving against the various branches of Giustizia e Libertà. Several students at the University of Pavia had been arrested in the spring of 1930, but released and 22 persons were arrested in Bologna, but most were absolved; the few that were convicted received relatively light sentences.⁵⁰ Publicity from the flight, combined with GL's very public support of Ferdinando De Rosa and regicide, forced the fascist police to concern themselves with the new movement.⁵¹ They sought ways to infiltrate the organization and found a willing agent in Carlo Del Re, a Venetian with a shadowy past. On 4 October 1930, he had sought out Count Carlo Sforza, at that time in Brussels, before the Lugano trial. Del Re insisted that the Italian antifascists had to engage in more violent opposition, and tried to get Sforza to agree to some terrorist acts in order to compromise all the Italian

⁴⁸Massimo Salvadori, "Il sacrificio di De Bosis," in *No al fascismo*, pp. 215-230; Iris Origo, *A Need to Testify: Portraits of Lauro De Bosis, Ruth Draper, Gaetano Salvemini and Ignazio Silone*, San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1984, pp. 33-78. For Origo, De Bosis was "a modern Icarus."

⁴⁹The French text of "The Story of My Death" was released, according to instructions left by De Bosis, to the French press by his friend Francesco Luigi Ferrari on 6 October 1931. It appeared on 14 October in *The New York Times*, the London *Sunday Times*, *Le Soir* in Brussels and in most of the important European papers. The first Italian translation was by Gaetano Salvemini, *La storia della mia morte*, Turin: de Silva, 1948.

⁵⁰Garosci, *Vita I*, pp. 215-216.

⁵¹ The best study of the fascist police is Franco Fucci's *Le polizie di Mussolini: La repressione dell'antifascismo nel "ventennio"*, Milan: Mursia, 1985.

exiles. Sforza, suspicious, declined the offer.⁵²

Del Re offered to assist Ernesto Rossi and Riccardo Bauer who were preparing an attack against tax collection centers in various cities. A chemical engineer, Umberto Ceva, was responsible for creating the phosphorous bombs that were to be used, and Del Re offered to help in their construction. The bombs were hidden in the countryside, driven there by Del Re himself; later, it was child's play to lead the police to the secret cache. At the same time, information arrived at the Central Committee of Giustizia e Libertà in Paris that a spy had infiltrated their ranks. Del Re was present in Bauer's house in Milan when the letter arrived from the Central Committee warning of an *agent provocateur* who was slightly handicapped. Del Re, who had lost two fingers of his left hand, managed to maintain his composure. When confronted with the letter, he joked with perfect coldness that they could not possibly think him a traitor. Yet the damage had been done: at that very moment on 30 October 1930, 24 members of Giustizia e Libertà were arrested. Riccardo Bauer was apprehended in Milan, along with Umberto Ceva, Ferruccio Parri and others; in Florence, Nello Traquandi was arrested; Ernesto Rossi was caught in Bergamo where he had gone to teach.⁵³

⁵²Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 217.

⁵³Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 218. The roundup captured Ugo Battaglia, Riccardo Bauer, Lidia Bevilacqua, Ettore Busan, Vincenzo Calace, Raffaele Cantoni, Giovanni Capaldi, Pietro Caprani, Umberto Ceva, Raffaele Cristofani, Ugo Cristofoletti, Alberto Damiani, Mario Damiani, Caterina Dei Cas, Francesco Fancello, Dino Gentili, Umberto Pagani, Ferruccio Parri, Cesare Pintus, Bernardino Roberto, Ernesto Rossi, Nello Traquandi, Giordano Viezzoli and Pietro Zari.

Del Re made his way to Lugano where on 2 November he telephoned Paris in an attempt to entice either Rosselli or Tarchiani into a trap. By now suspicions had fallen on Del Re and he was notified that no one would leave Paris; he would have to journey to Paris, where he arrived the next day and immediately made for Rosselli's house. There, in the course of incessant questioning by Rosselli and Tarchiani, he entangled himself in a web of contradictions. Surprisingly, Rosselli and Tarchiani decided to continue their interrogation the next day and allowed him to leave. Not so surprisingly, Del Re disappeared and was given a new name and identity by the fascist police. He had served his purpose and had been well compensated for his work. In 1930, when the average monthly salary in Italy was 1,000 *lire*, Del Re was paid 44,000 *lire* for his betrayal of Giustizia e Libertà.⁵⁴ Tragedy struck on Christmas Day 1930 when Umberto Ceva, held at the notorious Regina Coeli prison in Rome and afraid of betraying his "friend" Del Re under torture, committed suicide.⁵⁵

The stage was set for another trial. And yet, there was to be another adventure before the judicial proceedings began. Ernesto Rossi, arrested in Bergamo, was to be transported to Milan and then to Rome. Having made the trip several times, he knew that the train had to slow down near the resort town of Viareggio because of the nature of the terrain. Casually asking his two *carabinieri* if he could open the window for a breath of air, Rossi threw himself from the

⁵⁴Fucci, *Le polizie di Mussolini*, pp. 144-45. After the war, he published his account of the fascist era, *La leggenda del fascismo tradito nella realtà*, Rome: Italstampa, 1956.

⁵⁵Bianca Ceva, *1930: Retrospectiva di un dramma*. Milan: Ceschina, 1955.

slow-moving train, handcuffed as he was. He evaded capture through the night and even managed to free himself from the handcuffs, but when he arrived at the home of someone he knew, he had the door slammed in his face. In the morning, he was re-captured. In his account of the escape, Rossi commented on the common humanity he felt with his guards and repeated an idea that began with Gobetti and was to be a central pillar in analysis of fascism as developed by Rosselli and Giustizia e Libertà:

Fascism was not an accident attributable to the criminal initiative of Mussolini. It was the fruit of all our history. The regime would not fall because of internal disputes nor from economic crisis. To hope for a popular insurrection, to me, was folly. It was no longer the age of the barricades.⁵⁶

Rossi and Bauer were to be tried before the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State. The Tribunal was more a military institution than a judicial one; a president was chosen from the generals of the various armed forces, five judges were from the Fascist Militia, and the prosecutor was from the military judiciary. Crimes were made retroactive and its sentences were not subject to appeal.⁵⁷ Since they were linked to the planned bombings, Rossi and Bauer faced a potential capital case. The prospect of two of the leading figures of Giustizia e Libertà being led to the firing squad pushed Rosselli and the others into feverish activity. Along with Salvemini, Rosselli mounted a campaign through letters to leading political figures and newspapers. The focus of this activity was England

⁵⁶Garosci, *Vita I*, pp. 221-222; for Rossi's own account see his "Fuga dal treno," in *No al fascismo*, pp. 177-192. The quote is from p. 183.

⁵⁷Cesare Rossi, *Tribunale speciale*. Milan: Ceschina, 1952; and *Aula IV: Tutti i processi del Tribunale speciale*, Milan: La Pietra, 1976.

and the *Manchester Guardian*. Liberal intellectuals from all over Europe such as Arnold Toynbee, Bolton King, Ernst Cassirer and Thomas Mann lent their support to the campaign.⁵⁸ On 29 May 1931, the one-day trial began; all the accused carried themselves with an extraordinary grace which was noted by the journalists present. Bauer repeated the fundamental precepts of *Giustizia e Libertà*:

Our organization has a revolutionary character because the dictatorship has rendered any other form of political opposition impossible to all those who aspire to a free, democratic and republican regime in Italy. We call to action all those Italians who are offended in their national dignity and who are ready to actively contribute to the rebirth. For us, the revolution is a necessity, a duty.⁵⁹

Ernesto Rossi agreed, insisting that "Ideas are worth little if one is not ready to sustain them with action."⁶⁰

Unfortunately, Rome was not Savona nor Lugano and the Special Tribunal was not about to let another occasion slip by.⁶¹ Sentence was passed the next day in the so-called "trial of the intellectuals:" Rossi and Bauer each received 20 years in prison; a month later Nello Traquandi was sentenced to seven years. It was the most severe blow yet to the new movement.

⁵⁸Garosci, *Vita I*, p. 222, note 1.

⁵⁹Riccardo Bauer, quoted in Manlio Magini, "Il processo degli intellettuali," in *No al fascismo*, p. 213.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹For the fascist account of the trials and the work of the Tribunal Speciale, see the fascist Chief of Police Carmine Senise *Quand'ero capo della polizia*, Rome: Ruffolo, 1946; and Guido Leto, chief of the OVRA, *OVRA, fascismo, antifascismo*, Bologna: Cappelli, 1951. For a more balanced assessment see Franco Fucci, *Le polizie di Mussolini*.

Concentrazione Antifascista & PSI

During the 1920s and 1930s, antifascism acted as a unifying force for those Italians who had emigrated to France for political or economic reasons.⁶² The most important antifascist group in exile was the Concentrazione Antifascista, formed in May 1927, which attempted to unite a wide range of ideological positions under a single umbrella organization.⁶³ Understandably and regrettably, there were several problems inherent in this enterprise. In Rosselli's mind, it simply re-created, in exile, the failed policies and mind-set of the Aventine Secession and was irrevocably trapped by its pre-fascist liberal mentality. Relations between the Concentrazione Antifascista and Giustizia e Libertà were therefore tense from the beginning. In September 1930, the two groups signed a Patto di Unione e di Azione, but the fundamental differences were not to be resolved so easily. (As can be surmised, the anarchists and communists did not participate in the Concentrazione Antifascista; the former because of their suspicion of political hierarchies and the latter because the organization was *piccolo borghese* and "social fascist"). The Concentrazione Antifascista still believed in a peaceful, or at least legal, stand against Mussolini's regime whereas Rosselli was already insisting that the antifascist struggle had to adopt more

⁶²On fascism as a unifying force amongst Italian immigrants in France, see Pierre Guillen, "L'antifascisme, facteur d'intégration des italiens en France dans l'entre-deux guerres," in *L'emigrazione socialista nella lotta contro il fascismo (1926-1939)*, pp. 209-220.

⁶³The Concentrazione Antifascista published a newspaper, *La Libertà*.

active, revolutionary tactics. The various political parties that comprised the Concentrazione Antifascista were convinced that the regime was ready to fall at any moment and that Italy would return to the pre-fascist *status quo ante*. They were not alone: political thinkers and economists all over the world were predicting a short-lived regime. Then the old political parties would simply return to Italy and take up their positions once again. This was to be a central point of contention between the various antifascist groups and *Giustizia e Libertà*; the former were mired in a "negative" antifascism--they stressed what they were against; Rosselli insisted that to attract adherents and to legitimate their quest for power, antifascists had to have a "positive" program as well. Only the Communists would have a program as developed as *Giustizia e Libertà*.

Rosselli and *Giustizia e Libertà* insisted also on attacking the *fiancheggiatori* [supporters of the regime] such as the monarchy, the Papacy, and high capital while the Concentrazione Antifascista, which was comprised of monarchists, Catholics and Liberals, was much more muted in its criticism of these institutions. The monarchy had been implicated with fascism since October 1922 and after 1929 the Vatican had irrevocably linked itself to the regime. In July 1930, *Giustizia e Libertà* carried as its lead essay "Contro Rinascenti Illusioni," in which it defended itself from charges that its republican and anti-clerical position was harmful to the antifascist movement.⁶⁴ The mistaken premises, outlined in the essay, were that 1) The monarchy could be an element

⁶⁴*GL*, n. 9, July 1930; AGL, sezione IV, fascicolo 2, sottofascicolo 1, inserto 2, #5.

of antifascism because the king was antifascist and the military supported the king, not fascism; 2) that the Vatican was an important force because Catholic Action was loyal to the Pope and therefore antifascist; 3) To fight without these forces would be a political error since fascism could not be defeated without their support. But, the article responded, didn't the monarchy cede political power to the dictator and hadn't the Pope declared that Mussolini was "the man sent to us by Providence?"

Rosselli had a delicate political balancing act to perform: he insisted that the antifascist struggle should encompass as many people and positions as possible, including Catholics and Liberals. At the same time, Giustizia e Libertà and Rosselli were adamant in their conception of Italy as a republic. Consequently, they alienated the conservative and more moderate antifascist elements. The papal-monarchical antifascists, for their part, were caught in an inescapable contradiction. The Catholics insisted on a second *Risorgimento*; the essay pointed out that this was cynical hypocrisy since the Pope had been vociferously opposed to the first one, even to the point of inviting a foreign army into the country to prevent national unification and issuing *The Syllabus of Errors* in which he condemned liberalism, materialism and modernism in all its forms. As for the monarchists, the *Risorgimento* had been "republican in spirit but monarchical in form."⁶⁵

Rosselli's judgement of the Concentrazione Antifascista was not entirely

⁶⁵"Lotta Antimonarchica," *GL*, n. 37, n.d. AGL, sezione IV, fascicolo 2, sottofascicolo 1, inserto 2, #17.

negative. He recognized that it served an important function in the early antifascist emigration by maintaining an atmosphere of collaboration and cooperation among the exiles. It managed to preserve vital forces and present to the world another aspect of Italy and the Italians. Yet Rosselli only agreed to join the Concentrazione in 1932, almost three years after the founding of *Giustizia e Libertà* and only after lengthy negotiations concerning the autonomy of both parties and a clear division of labor: the Concentrazione would be responsible for all activity in exile while *Giustizia e Libertà* was recognized as having responsibility for clandestine activity in Italy. On 12-13 November 1932, the Consiglio Generale of the Concentrazione unanimously voted to accept the so-called "November Pact" with *Giustizia e Libertà*, in which it recognized GL as "the unity of revolutionary forces consecrated in Italy" and agreed to fight for the following objectives:

- 1) A DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, based on the working classes, organized on the widest foundation of autonomy, on the freedom of political and trade union associations, freedom of the press, a free, secular and unitary school, the separation of Church and State and the abolition of the Lateran Pacts;
- 2) A NEW SOCIAL ORDER that shatters the capitalist monopoly of the means of production and exchange...the socialization of essential industrial and financial institutions, factory control and democracy, land to the peasants, a home for everyone;
- 3) INTERNATIONAL PEACE, through a radical program of disarmament...the development of federalism and the absolute respect for cultural autonomy...free exchange of goods and labor, the collaboration of free people in the creation of a United States of Europe.⁶⁶

⁶⁶"Il Patto di Novembre della Concentrazione Antifascista," in *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 5, December 1932, pp. 73-74. Also published in *La Libertà*, 17 November 1932. The original of this document, with Rosselli's handwritten notes and marginalia, can be found in AGL, sezione

Yet the accord could not hold. There was a fundamental difference in the character of the two organizations that Rosselli recognized as insuperable. The CA was legal, public, pacific while GL was illegal and revolutionary. When in April of 1934, the Executive Committee of *Giustizia e Libertà* sent a proposal for a more formal unification between the two parties, it was rejected and the entire edifice of the *Concentrazione Antifascista* collapsed.⁶⁷ In its call for a unified revolutionary front, the movement insisted on the trinity of "Liberty, Socialism, Republic" and suggested a congress be held on 10 June 1934--the tenth anniversary of Giacomo Matteotti's assassination--to consecrate the birth of a new Italian revolutionary, socialist, republican party that would synthesize the five various components of the *Concentrazione* (PSI, PRI, PSLI, LIDU, and GL). The most controversial points in the "Proposta" were the suggestion of debating whether to join the Second International and the abolition of the various party journals and organs, to be replaced by one newspaper in exile and one in Italy. The "Proposta" specifically called for the dismantling of the *Concentrazione* to be replaced by a new revolutionary party. The LIDU would direct a proletarian university in Paris with branches in all the principle centers of emigration. The CGL⁶⁸ would become the liaison between the new party and the workers and

III, fascicolo 2, n. 54.

⁶⁷The "Proposta di Unificazione" was reprinted in *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 11, June 1934, pp. 93-98; on the collapse of the "Concentrazione Antifascista," see the same issue, pp. 89-92.

⁶⁸The socialist-dominated CGL saw the publication by *Giustizia e Libertà* of a "Giornale degli operai" [Workers' Newspaper] as infringing on its terrain. Garosci, *Vita I*, pp. 279-81.

peasants by adopting the structural form of the Belgian Workers' Party in which the fusion of political and trade union forces would be complete.⁶⁹ It might not be outside the realm of possibility that Rosselli foresaw that these conditions would be rejected and thence precipitate the end of the Concentrazione Antifascista.

In the very next issue of *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, (which was also the last), Rosselli made his strongest criticism yet of the old parties:

The old parties are dead. They survive in that museum of antifascism that is Paris, but in Italy they no longer have a hold. They died precisely because they were alive yesterday, because their function and essential motives are implanted in the old society which fascism decisively liquidated. To defeat fascism, one can no longer remain poised between two epochs; it is necessary, with open-mindedness, to impose oneself in the center of the fascist epoch, assuming fascism as the point of departure.⁷⁰

The PSI had rejected the "Proposta" in early April,⁷¹ and on 5 May 1934 the General Council of the Concentrazione Antifascista reviewed and approved the decision by the Central Committee to dissolve the organization.⁷²

Giustizia e Libertà also was involved in polemics with the PSI and the Italian Republican Party (PRI). In August 1930, the republicans Cipriano

⁶⁹"Proposta," *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 11, June 1934, pp. 95-98.

⁷⁰"1935," in *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 12, January 1935, p. 3.

⁷¹For the position of the PSI, see "La polemica con Giustizia e Libertà e la rottura della Concentrazione Antifascista," *Nuovo Avanti*, 19 May 1934. Excerpts have been reprinted in Luciano Guerri, *Il Partito Socialista Italiano dal 1919 al 1946*, Bologna: Il Mulino 1969, pp. 144-49.

⁷²Rosselli's speech at the meeting was printed in *Avanti! (L'Avvenire del Lavoratore)*, 12 May 1934; see also his essay, "La fine della Concentrazione Antifascista," in *Giustizia e Libertà*, 18 May 1934; also in *QGL*, n. 11, June 1934, pp. 89-92.

Facchinetti and Raffaele Rossetti resigned from the leadership of Giustizia e Libertà. A serious rift developed when the PRI created "Giovane Italia" as a clandestine group in Italy, modelled on Mazzini's subversive organization. When in June 1931, GL and the PSI signed an accord,⁷³ the PRI saw this an attempt to limit their influence in Italy. Rosselli continually had to insist on the republican credentials of his group. In a post-script to a letter sent to the Central Committee of the Concentrazione Antifascista on 1 December 1931, he decried the rumors that the split between the PRI and GL was occasioned by the "lack of confidence on the part of intransigent elements of the Republican Party toward the republicanism of Giustizia e Libertà." The schism, Rosselli maintained, was caused exclusively by personal motives and that the republican position of Giustizia e Libertà had never seriously been questioned by responsible people.⁷⁴

The polemic with the PSI was graver and began with the publication of Emilio Lussu's essay "Orientamenti" in the *Quaderni*.⁷⁵ In Lussu, we hear the echo of Rosselli:

...today it is difficult to speak the language of socialism. Socialism is discredited...Bakunin used to say that for an uprising, one had to have the devil

⁷³Published in *Avanti!*, September 1931; now in *Storia del socialismo italiano*, ed. G. Sabbatucci, vol. IV: *Gli anni del fascismo (1926-1943)* Rome: Il Poligono, 1981, pp. 452-54.

⁷⁴Letter to the Central Committee of the Concentrazione Antifascista, 1 December 1931; in AGL, sezione III, fascicolo 2, n.9.

⁷⁵Emilio Lussu, "Orientamenti," *QGL*, n. 10, February 1934, pp. 58-72. On the relationship with between GL and the PSI see Santi Fedele "Giellisti e Socialisti dalla fondazione di GL (1929) alla politica dei Fronti Popolari," in *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, pp. 303-322; see also Joel Blatt, "Carlo Rosselli's Socialism: The Giellisti and the Socialists," paper presented at the International Conference "One Hundred Years of Italian Democratic Socialism, 1892-1992," the Kennedy Library, Boston, March 1993.

in the flesh. Continuing with the same figurative language, it can be said that democratic socialism...has had a sleeping angel in the flesh.⁷⁶

Italian socialists must realize a way to pose themselves historically between the French Jacobins and the Russian Bolsheviks; in other words, they must reconcile the victory of individualism as conquered in the religious and political revolutions of the past centuries with the collective demands of production and exchange of modern civilization. The Sardinian radical insisted that "for the democratic revolution and even for the socialist revolution, living bourgeois are more necessary than dead socialists..."⁷⁷

The opportunity for an invigorating and historical renewal of Italian socialism was lost because the PSI was extremely jealous and sensitive concerning its position as the only socialist entity in exile and refused to consider a fusion with the younger, heretical exiles in GL. The PSI felt it could not risk losing a possible alliance with the PCd'I by collaborating with GL; for its part, GL refused to abandon its conception of the political struggle and its desire to begin *tabula rasa* and create a new Italian Socialist Party.⁷⁸

Rosselli and Giustizia e Libertà were criticized from all quarters and accused of killing the Concentrazione Antifascista. Perhaps the severest criticism came, ironically, from Angelo Tasca. From a working-class background, Tasca had been a colleague of Gramsci, Togliatti and Terracini in the PCd'I and

⁷⁶Lussu, "Orientamenti," pp. 66, 70.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Santi Fedele, "Giellisti e Socialisti," p. 321.

developed into a fierce anti-Stalinist after spending 1928 in Moscow. For his heresies, he was expelled from the PCd'I in September 1929. Although he became a French citizen who collaborated with the Vichy regime during World War II, he later wrote an important and well-regarded study of the rise of fascism.⁷⁹ In a letter dated 1 May 1934, Tasca accused Rosselli of provoking a crisis that could only benefit fascism; in fact, the dissolution of the Concentrazione Antifascista, according to Tasca, was fascism's greatest success since 1926. His criticism only became more acerbic:

From the ideological point of view, your group is heterogeneous and, it appears to me, lacking true originality. Nothing that goes beyond old fashioned revisionism...A sequel of Gobetti and a pinch of activism are not enough to give your thought a critical and positive content sufficient that you can alone provide a doctrinal renewal of Italian socialism...⁸⁰

Rosselli responded that very day:⁸¹

...it did not escape me that you held GL in low regard, above all on the ideological plane; but I deluded myself that even if you rejected my personal position, at least those many young Italian youths who we have attracted to antifascism and that have written for the Quaderni, might have interested you and constitute, in this desert of thought, an interesting phenomenon, perhaps the only interesting phenomenon...You concede to us a "pinch" of activism (even in this regard you are very avaricious!). I think that this "pinch," after the painful experiences of European socialism, is worth more than a thousand Marxist exegeses.

In truth, the PSI had come through the fascist experience in worse shape

⁷⁹Angelo Tasca, *Nascita e avvento del fascismo*, Bari: Laterza, 1965.

⁸⁰Angelo Tasca to Carlo Rosselli, 1 May 1934; AGL, sezione I, fascicolo 1, sottofascicolo 115, inserto 1.

⁸¹Since both Tasca and Rosselli were living in Paris, their letters were usually received the day they were mailed. Rosselli's response is in AGL, sezione I, fascicolo I, sottofascicolo 115, inserto 2, but the first page of the letter is damaged.

than GL or the PCd'I. Its history from the advent of the rise of fascism was a bewildering story of schisms, alliances, ruptures and more failures than victories.⁸² Founded in 1892, it had achieved important victories and had made great strides until January 1921, when at the Congress of Livorno, the PCd'I had been formed. What remained of the PSI was still divided between the maximalists and the reformists, which led to another schism in Rome the next year that saw the birth of the PSU. These divisions were carried over into the French exile.⁸³ In March 1930, at a meeting of the PSI in exile, there was still another schism between "maximalists" under Angela Balabanoff and *Avanti!*, published in Paris and "fusionists" led by Pietro Nenni, with *Avanti! (L'Avvenire del Lavoratore)*, published in Zurich. A month later the "maximalists" withdrew from the Concentrazione Antifascista. At the first Congress of the PSI in exile in July, the PSI and the PSULI [Partito Socialista Unitario dei Lavoratori Italiani] were unified. By July of the next year, a preliminary accord had been reached between the PSI and GL which paved the way for the entrance of the latter into the Concentrazione Antifascista in November.

Filippo Turati's death in Paris on 29 March 1932 symbolized the end of

⁸²Leonardo Rapone, *Da Turati a Nenni. Il socialismo italiano negli anni del fascismo*. Milan: Franco Angeli, 1992; Antonio Landolfi, *Storia del PSI: Cento anni di socialismo in Italia da Filippo Turati a Bettino Craxi*, Milan: SugarCo, 1990; especially chpt. 5 "Il revisionismo di Rosselli e l'unità con i comunisti," pp. 135-178.

⁸³Gaetano Arfè, "La politica del gruppo dirigente socialista nell'esilio," in *L'emigrazione socialista nella lotta contro il fascismo (1926-1939)*, pp. 13-33. For the history of the party congresses in exile, see *Il Partito socialista italiano nei suoi congressi*, vol. IV, *I congressi dell'esilio*, ed. Gaetano Arfè, Milan: Edizioni Avanti!, 1963.

an era.⁸⁴ The passing of the "grand old man" of Italian socialism presented Rosselli and the antifascist resistance with an opportunity to reflect on the history of Italian socialism and its present crisis in the context of fascism. Rosselli's desire to acknowledge Turati's pivotal place in Italian socialism led to one of his most important essays, "Filippo Turati e il socialismo italiano."⁸⁵ Tracing his early life, Rosselli pointed out that as a student, Turati had been influenced by the legacy of the *Risorgimento*, the experience of the Paris Commune, the positivism of Ardigò, and the work of Loria. Ardigò, wrote Rosselli, like Feuerbach and Mill, never held the extreme positions of materialism and naturalism that reduced the subject to the object and he passed on to Turati the recognition that consciousness--as an active and creative force--was the point of departure for a positivist philosophy. Hence, Turati's was an "idealistic positivism or a positivist idealism."⁸⁶

In his short biography, Rosselli divided Turati's life into four periods: 1891-1900 was a period of the affirmation of the socialist movement and the struggle for political and economic liberty; 1900-1911 was a time of parliamentary reform and the struggle between various currents within the movement; 1911-1921 was marked by the Libyan War, World War I, the victory of the Bolsheviks;

⁸⁴On Turati's exile and death in Paris, cfr. Alessandro Schiavi, *Esilio e morte di Filippo Turati, 1926-1932*, Rome: Opere Nuove, 1956.

⁸⁵"Filippo Turati e il socialismo italiano," *QGL*, n. 3, June 1932, pp. 1-42; now partially reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio*, I, pp. 85-133. The original manuscript is in the BNF, FR, cassetta 1, inserto II, n. 2.

⁸⁶"Filippo Turati e il socialismo italiano," *QGL*, n. 3, June 1932, p. 6.

1921-1932 represented the period of struggle against fascism. For Rosselli, the first period was marked by Turati's participation (1892) in founding the Partito Socialista dei Lavoratori Italiani (which later became the PSI) and his creation of *Critica Sociale*, a "Bi-weekly Review of Scientific Socialism" the same year until it was suppressed by the fascist regime in 1926. Collaborating with his companion Anna Kuliscioff, Turati crafted *Critica Sociale* into one of the most important protagonists in the exchange of ideas in Europe.⁸⁷

As was characteristic of Rosselli, he was not about to let the traditional form and rhetorical tropes of the obituary (granted, at 40 pages, this was no ordinary obituary) keep him from a sharp critique of Turati's ideas and career. But as he explained:

While examining the work of Mazzini in 1860, Alexander Herzen had written that "Mazzini is so great that to refrain from a critique would be to offend him."⁸⁸

The best homage that could be paid by the younger generation was not "an indistinct panegyric," but in an "affectionate effort of critical comprehension."

That Turati insisted on the dogma of a scientific socialism was the reason he found himself in a curious position: adored leader of the party, but rarely followed. Rosselli, noting Turati's ideological position as a believer in a republic,

⁸⁷Among those that wrote for the pages of *Critica Sociale* were Leonida Bissolati, Arturo Labriola and Antonio Labriola, Gaetano Salvemini, Claudio Treves, Benedetto Croce, Ivanoe Bonomi, Ferri, Ardigò, Guglielmo Ferrero, Cesare Lombroso, Rodolfo Mondolfo, Antonio Cabiati, Luigi Einaudi, Italo Svevo--in short, almost the entire spectrum of the Italian intelligentsia in addition to those European writers like Engels, Kautsky and the Belgian socialist Emile Vandervelde.

⁸⁸"Filippo Turati e il socialismo italiano," p. 42.

but his political position as a (temporary) supporter of the monarchy, wrote:

Turati did not understand that in a country like Italy, blessed with such a scarce political consciousness; where the great conflicts--from the religious to the institutional--that transform the masses into a people; where freedom had been conquered by an restricted, bourgeois and patrician elite; where the monarchy had systematically suffocated the popular movement--in Italy the republican struggle would have had an extremely important pedagogical function.⁸⁹

Nor could Rosselli share with Turati the rosy vision of socialist achievements during the fifteen years before World War I. Instead, it was precisely at that time when the symptoms of a profound moral crisis were manifest, not only in the party, but in the nation at large. Another criticism, developed not only by Rosselli but also by Salvemini and the *meridionalista* Tommaso Fiore, was directed toward the unsophisticated conception of the working class as embedded in the official ideology of the PSI. Tied to an orthodox Marxism, the Italian socialists (both "revolutionary" and "reformist") concentrated on the industrialized proletariat. In Italy, this group existed only in the north and only in a few large cities such as Milan, Turin and Genoa. The great majority of workers were agricultural and artisanal. Even universal suffrage, generally regarded as one of the great victories of the Left before the war, was tainted for Rosselli: the right to vote was won after a very small sacrifice; it was granted from above (by Giolitti in return for social peace) and the Italian people once again came to benefit from a fundamental political institution without having sacrificed anything to achieve it. "No wonder that later, it did not know how to

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 18.

defend it."

Today, in the context of the virtual disintegration of the Italian Republic because of massive corruption on the part of the ruling elite, Rosselli's words ring prophetically true:

...In the not too distant future, Italian socialism must radically transform its constitutional structure. After the fall of fascism, with the revolution complete, the dominant problems will no longer be of opposition or propaganda, but of governing in the largest sense of the word. And the government must not then be consigned to the hands of only the party, always inclined to transform itself into a sect, but to the organic representatives of the working class, of the entire world of labor which through its network of worker, cooperative, cultural institutions will constitute the new State. Only an organic, permanent, intimate contact between political and economic socialism, between party and unions, between elites and masses, will impede the possible oligarchical, bureaucratic, and sectarian degeneration of the party, favoring the rise of a substantial democracy.⁹⁰

In 1899, during the "crisis of Marxism" occasioned by the publication of Bernstein's book, Turati supported Kautsky against Bernstein and Sorel, but by 1902 had written that Bernstein's ideas were "beneficial" and by 1906 was proclaiming himself fully converted. This is what led Croce to write that Turati's Marxism performed a liberal function in Italy.

Turati once wrote to Treves, in words that Rosselli approvingly quotes and which could just as well apply to the younger, "heretical" socialist: "Is this not our perennial destiny, the glorious labor which we have elected for ourselves, to march against the current, in hatred of all the folly, to always be wrong today so that we will be right tomorrow?"⁹¹

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 33.

⁹¹Quoted in "Filippo Turati e il socialismo italiano," p. 37.

The figure of Turati embodied the entire problem of the *Risorgimento* which now repropose itself in dramatic form before the consciousness of the Italian people. He appears to us today as the great and necessary end of a voyage between the generation of 1848 and the generation of revolutionary antifascism, between the political *Risorgimento* and the social and moral *Risorgimento*.

Liberty and justice, justice and liberty. Without rhetoric one can affirm that Cattaneo, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Pisacane, the great defeated of the political *Risorgimento* pass along to Turati, this great, but provisional loser of the social *Risorgimento*, to announce, indissolubly united, the new history of Italy.⁹²

PCd'I

Relations between Giustizia e Libertà and the PCd'I were often tense and not without a certain component of acerbity. There was more than sibling rivalry here; the PCd'I, with good cause, perceived GL as its most serious competitor for the allegiance of young, active antifascists. This is borne out by the time, resources and attention that the PCd'I devoted to attacking the ideological, theoretical and organizational positions of the new movement. The two groups were the most vital, innovative and well-organized of the exiled and underground antifascist organizations.⁹³

When GL was created in the autumn of 1929, the PCd'I was undergoing a particularly delicate moment in its history. Many of its leading lights were either in prison or in exile, the first implications of Stalinism were leaking out of

⁹²Ibid., p. 42.

⁹³On the relations between GL and the PCI, see Aldo Agosti, "Il PCI di fronte al movimento di GL (1929-1937)," in *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, pp. 331-363.

Moscow, and the party hierarchy was being criticized for its handling of the "Tasca affair." In early 1930, the PCd'I passed judgement on the general state of antifascism and the Concentrazione Antifascista in particular:

All these movements today become fascistized quickly, in their ideology and the political orientation of their leading cadres and seek, or have already found, organic ties with fascism to fulfill a function of preserving the capitalist order threatened by the revolution.⁹⁴

The first reference to *Giustizia e Libertà* in the communist press appeared in April 1930, in an anonymous review of Lussu's and Nitti's books chronicling their escape from Lipari. The reviewer employed sarcasm and heaped scorn on the "romantic literature" which prized "exemplary action" and "the clamorous gesture."⁹⁵ A few months later, Ruggero Grieco proved his ignorance when he assumed *Giustizia e Libertà* and the Concentrazione Antifascista were, for ideological purposes, identical.⁹⁶ Palmiro Togliatti was convinced that "the men of *Giustizia e Libertà* are, amongst the social democrats, the furthest away from the working classes, the most decisively against every class agitation,"⁹⁷ while Giorgio Amendola, son of the murdered Giovanni Amendola, wrote:

That which social democracy conceals under a demagogic phraseology, [GL] declares openly...the men of *Giustizia e Libertà* do not hide their reactionary

⁹⁴Resolution adopted by PCd'I, in *Lo Stato Operaio* IV, n. 3, March 1930, p. 195.

⁹⁵J. "Le 'loro' prigionieri. A proposito di due libri e di numerose pubblicazioni," *Lo Stato Operaio* IV, n. 4, April 1930, pp. 275-79.

⁹⁶Ruggero Grieco, "Il processo di fascistizzazione della socialdemocrazia italiana. Le 'originalità' di un programma," in *Lo Stato Operaio* IV, n. 8, August 1930, p. 294.

⁹⁷Palmiro Togliatti, "A che punto siamo," quoted in Aldo Agosti, p. 336.

language.⁹⁸

This insistence on identifying GL with social democracy showed an inability or perhaps a refusal to acknowledge that Rosselli's movement went beyond the traditional thinking of European social democracy.

The theoreticians of the PCd'I were to examine and attack specific documents produced by the movement. In March 1931, *Giustizia e Libertà* published Rosselli's "Agli Operai," a direct appeal to the workers of Italy, in which he identified those sentiments which could be used to unite socialists, republicans, communists, democrats and others in the antifascist cause ("A **hatred** of murderous and ravenous fascism; the **persecution** that effects all equally; the **hunger** that knocks on all doors; the **war** that threatens everyone; the **freedom** denied and denigrated; the impending **economic disaster**). He went on to propose a program of "necessary freedoms:"

- 1) Re-establishing freedom of association, organization, press, vote and emigration;
- 2) The convocation of a constituent assembly elected by universal suffrage which would have the task of creating a new political and social regime;
- 3) Immediate release of all political prisoners and indemnification for all victims of reaction;
- 4) Immediate revision of all collective contracts of labor;
- 5) The transferral to workers and peasant organizations of all the property of the fascist party and its organizations.
- 6) Reestablishment of the internal Commissions and the widening of their powers;
- 7) An immediate reduction of at least 2 billion lire in the military budget and half a billion of the police to benefit the unemployed and the poor (subsidies and public works);
- 8) Abolition of the grain duty and immediate reduction of the price of bread;

⁹⁸Giorgio Amendola, quoted in Agosti, p. 336.

- 9) Legislation in favor of poor renters (reduction of rents, construction of popular homes);
- 10) The confiscation of the goods of those responsible for the dictatorship and a Revolutionary Tribunal for fascist leaders.⁹⁹

At the Fourth Party Congress of the PCd'I in Cologne (1931), Luigi Longo ("Gallo") was given the task of responding to Rosselli. In *Gli inganni e le menzogne di Giustizia e Libertà* (The deceptions and lies of Giustizia e Libertà'), Longo accused the new movement of bringing together all the most heterogeneous and reactionary elements of bourgeois society, impeding the organization and action of the working class and denying the possibility of a genuine communist revolution in Italy. The distinction made between parliamentary democracy and fascism by Rosselli and GL was a smokescreen to conceal class interests; the Soviet model was the only form of effective democracy.¹⁰⁰ Ironically, "Agli Operai" pointed out the uncomfortable truth that "fascist Italy has become the principal supplier of war material to Russia." Indeed, on 25 September 1933, the Soviet ambassador to Italy Potemkin signed the "Friendship, Non-Aggression and Neutrality Pact" with Mussolini's regime.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹"Agli Operai," anonymous in *Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 24, March 1931, pp. 8-11. Originals can be found in the AGL, sezione IV, fascicolo 2, sottofascicolo 1, inserto 4, documento 2 (where it appears as a supplement to the satirical journal *Becco Giallo* [supplement n. 73]); and in ACS, busta 104, f. K 56/4 "Giustizia e Libertà. Manifesti e stampi." Partially reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 26-32. The ten points can be found pp. 26-27.

¹⁰⁰"Gallo" (Luigi Longo), *Gli inganni e le menzogne di Giustizia e Libertà*, Paris: Edizioni del PCd'I, 1931.

¹⁰¹*Scritti dell'esilio* I, p. 30. On the curious relationship between Bolshevik Russia and Fascist Italy, see Joseph Clavitt Clark, *Russia and Italy Against Hitler: The Bolshevik-Fascist Rapprochement of the 1930s*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1991. The Italian communists were well aware of this situation, see "Alcuni problemi a proposito dei quali bisogna essere molto chiaro," in *Lo Stato Operaio* IV, n. 11-12, November-December 1930, pp. 768-71.

The first order of business was to defeat fascism; once the regime was defeated, each party would return to its own course of action. If the communists demonstrate in future elections of having the consent of the majority, Giustizia e Libertà would be the first to recognize their right to govern.¹⁰²

The essence of the antifascist resistance was the struggle for freedom:

Freedom is bread, it is dignity, it is the necessary condition for every transformation and every improvement, it is and will be justice...All men in all ages of history, among all the lands of the earth, have longed for freedom. The difference between men and animals is precisely in this aspiration of men for a life of freedom, for a life ordered by reason and justice...**Freedom, in a word, is the people as master of their own destiny.**¹⁰³

Luigi Longo saw this language as appealing to the least politically conscious segment of Italian society, the petite bourgeoisie, and characteristic of "the deceptions and lies" of Giustizia e Libertà. Longo's diatribe was followed by a much more serious critique of Rosselli and GL, this time by Giorgio Amendola, whose essay "Con il proletariato o contro il proletariato" appeared in June 1931 with the subtitle "Conversing with the intellectuals of my generation."¹⁰⁴ Here for the first time was an analysis of Giustizia e Libertà rather than a polemical treatise commissioned by party leaders.

These young intellectuals, nurtured under the Crocean influence of idealist philosophy, lacking a knowledge of Marx because of the poverty of Italian Marxism, were marked by a pragmatism, a voluntarism (the influence of *La Voce* and Sorel) and had accepted the **moral** character of the antifascist struggle, seeing

¹⁰²*Scritti dell'esilio* I, p. 31.

¹⁰³*Ibid.* pp. 31-32, emphasis in the original.

¹⁰⁴Giorgio Amendola, "Con il proletariato o contro il proletariato? Discorrendo con gli intellettuali della mia generazione," in *Lo Stato Operaio* V, n. 6, June 1931, pp. 309-318.

in the "moral question" not just a simple determination of the responsibility of single fascist leaders in this or that assassination, but the entire problem of the "liberation" of the Italian people, of its conscious participation in political life.¹⁰⁵

Praising Gobetti and his *Rivoluzione liberale* (and repeating the famous judgement passed on Gobetti by Gramsci), Amendola went on to criticize Rosselli and Nenni's *Quarto Stato* of 1925-26 as an example of how a generation educated in idealism tried with great effort to understand Marx, only to end with confused and disordered thinking. Giustizia e Libertà managed to attract many of the forces of the Left and the ideological descendants of Gobetti and forge them into a new movement. But, according to Amendola, the desire to maintain such a diverse group meant, in the end, total ideological confusion and equivocation. Hence, the ironic and paradoxical intellectual poverty of GL as a "movement of intellectuals."¹⁰⁶

Rosselli immediately recognized the force behind Amendola's critique and personally responded in the inaugural issue of the *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*.¹⁰⁷ Agreeing that Gobetti, the "master and sure guide for all," had been correct in understanding the social and historical function of the proletariat, Rosselli challenged the Communists' "appropriation" of the martyred intellectual. While they declared themselves followers of Gobetti, the young Turinese intellectual himself had once written, "In Marx, I am seduced by the historian and

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 310.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 316.

¹⁰⁷"Risposta a Giorgio Amendola," in *QGL*, n. 1, January 1932, pp. 33-40.

the apostle of the workers' movement. The economist is dead, with surplus-value, the dream of the abolition of classes, with the prophecy of collectivism...Historical materialism...and the theory of class struggle are instruments forever embedded in social science and are his glory as a theorist."¹⁰⁸

Rosselli countered the charge of "intellectual poverty;" as he never tired of repeating, the most urgent aspect of the present situation was to defeat fascism by creating the largest possible alliance for concerted action after a shameful period of inactivity and impotence. As a counter-charge, he accused Amendola and the communists of believing in the "grotesque phantom" of the "socialfascism." Where Amendola and the Communists saw the re-evaluation of the lira in 1927 as proof of the alliance between the bourgeoisie and the regime, Rosselli pointed out that the re-evaluation was resisted by the banks, imposed on Volpi by Mussolini because of the economic ignorance of the dictator in order to maintain the prestige of the regime. "Where you see a proof of fascist-bourgeois identification, we see one of the classic examples of the autonomy of the dictatorial mechanism from the social forces that converged to create it." Fascism cannot be identified with a single social and economic class; it springs from roots in the Italian soil and expresses profound vices, latent weaknesses, and the poverty of the entire nation. It was Gobetti, as Rosselli recalled, who formed the "stupendous judgement" that "Fascism is the autobiography of a nation..."

¹⁰⁸Piero Gobetti as quoted by Carlo Rosselli, *ibid.*, p. 37.

In concluding his essay, Rosselli addressed Amendola's question head-on:

Your article opens with a question: With or against the proletariat? We close ours with the natural--the only possible--answer: with the proletariat. But we quickly add that there are diverse ways to serve the cause of the proletariat.

Communism serves the proletariat by reducing it to a herd, imposing a jesuitical discipline, precluding autonomy, freedom of criticism and judgement, deluding it with a perpetual exaltation of its virtues, the easier to render it the object of a bureaucratic dictatorship of the party.

Giustizia e Libertà intends to serve the proletariat by developing in it the sense of dignity, of autonomy, of freedom; pushing it to struggle and sacrifice, without vain, flattering and humiliating adulation; to make of every worker a **man**, in the highest and most noble sense of the word, free in the workshop as well as life, before the *padrone* as well as before his conscience.¹⁰⁹

Amendola's essay was part of a well-organized campaign to discredit Rosselli and the new movement in the eyes of the antifascist resistance. At least five major articles were published in the PCd'I party organ in exile *Lo Stato Operaio* between September 1931 and November 1932.¹¹⁰ Togliatti began by recapitulating the standard line: Giustizia e Libertà shared many of the characteristics of the failed Aventine Secession (no mention was made of Rosselli's fierce condemnation of the Aventine); its exiled leaders were "reactionary ideologues"--indeed, the very fact that they were in exile was a "capitulation, a flight, a new betrayal" (no mention of Togliatti in Moscow). For Togliatti, the new movement represented the attempt by the petit bourgeois to

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 65.

¹¹⁰"Ercoli" (Palmiro Togliatti), "Sul movimento di Giustizia e Libertà," *Lo Stato Operaio*, V, n. 9, September 1931, pp. 463-73; "E.R." (Togliatti), "Il programma di Giustizia e Libertà," VI, n. 3, March 1932, pp. 87-96; Ruggero Grieco, "Il programma agrario di Giustizia e Libertà," VI, n. 4, April 1932, pp. 157-65; Ruggero Grieco, "Il nostro programma contadino e i suoi critici," VI, n. 6, June 1932, pp. 302-16; Ruggero Grieco, "Ancora sul programma agrario di Giustizia e Libertà," VI, n. 11, November 1932, pp. 669-77.

carve out an autonomous position in the antifascist crusade and to gain control of the entire resistance movement. But the petite bourgeois mentality inevitably becomes an instrument of counter-revolution, and the carrier of the most reactionary solutions on the political and ideological field.¹¹¹ Again, the communists took up the cudgel of Gobetti with which to beat Rosselli. A *rapprochement* between Gobetti and Rosselli was not only impossible, but absurd. "...Gobetti was a poor intellectual, while Rosselli is a rich one, objectively and personally tied to the ruling capitalist classes...Gobetti was a scholar, passionately taken with ideas and an original brilliance. Rosselli is a worthless dilettante, lacking any serious theoretical formulation...Rosselli's book [*Socialisme libéral*] is directly allied with fascist political literature...it is a thin, antisocialist libel and nothing else."¹¹² Togliatti's appropriation of the martyred Gobetti was cynical maneuvering; when the young Turinese scholar was publishing his first journal in 1919, Togliatti had grouped him with "the parasites of culture."¹¹³

Two fundamental precepts of Rosselli's thought--the centrality of freedom and the need for a second *Risorgimento* also come under attack. "The exaltation of 'freedom'," according to Togliatti, "is a reactionary enterprise," while the antifascist revolution could be nothing less than a revolution "against the *Risorgimento*, against its ideology, against the solution that it had given to the

¹¹¹"Ercoli", "Sul movimento di Giustizia e Libertà," pp. 464-466.

¹¹²Ibid., pp. 464-68.

¹¹³Palmito Togliatti, "I parassiti della cultura," in *Ordine Nuovo* I, n. 3, 15 May 1919.

problem of the unity of the State and all the problems of national life." This though, was precisely Rosselli's point. Taking Gobetti's *Risorgimento senza eroi*¹¹⁴ as a point of departure, Rosselli had argued that while the political outcome of unification was to be deplored, no one could deny the moral, spiritual and ethical function it had performed. Yet Togliatti concluded his first attack by declaring that Rosselli and the followers of GL were the "stupid and wicked servants of capitalism and fascism."¹¹⁵

After the hostile reception to the appearance of *Socialisme libéral*, this was, in effect Rosselli's second baptism of fire in the polemical world of anti-fascism. Yet the response only served to make him work harder in diffusing the message of Giustizia e Libertà. From Vienna, where he was conducting research, Nello wrote to his older brother:

I am proud of you and your work: little by little your name begins to be repeated by all as one who will one day be on the front line in Italy. Forward, therefore--but beware of the puddles, be careful never to muddy yourself, even your shoes; choose your collaborators well...If at times you feel yourself alone or ignored, chase away the thought; there is a great deal of fire beneath the ashes in Italy...You will finish, we will finish with victory if you never give up, not even for a moment, not even an inch.¹¹⁶

In December 1931, Giorgio Amendola, using the false name "Fortunato," made his way back to Italy with the mission of establishing contact with GL

¹¹⁴Piero Gobetti, *Risorgimento senza eroi*, Turin: Einaudi, 1956.

¹¹⁵"Ercoli", "Sul movimento di Giustizia e Libertà," p. 472. In another essay, Togliatti had written, "Rosselli is dissident fascism;" see "Caldara e gli altri," in Palmiro Togliatti, *Opere*, 4 vols., ed. Ernesto Ragionieri, Rome: Riuniti, 1967-1979; vol. 2, p. 392.

¹¹⁶Letter of 4 December 1931; reprinted in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 516.

groups in Milan and Turin, in order to try and enlist members into the PCd'I.¹¹⁷ Giustizia e Libertà had begun a new publication, *Voci di officina* (Voices from the workshop) with an inaugural article entitled "Prospettive della lotta rivoluzionaria in Italia" and signed "A group of students belonging to Giustizia e Libertà." The PCd'I now clearly saw a challenge to its hegemony over the proletariat. When GL published its "revolutionary program"¹¹⁸ in January 1932, the PCd'I returned to the fray. "A masterpiece of hypocrisy, lies and stupidity," that was not very different from the fascist program of 1919.¹¹⁹ In truth, this new attack did not do much more than repeat the charges levelled by Togliatti several months before. A central tenet of this analysis was that there could be no revolutionary forces outside the proletariat; by definition, all other social and economic groups were reactionary. This rather simplistic and foolish belief was to undermine communist thinking, even during the era of the Popular Front.

One of the results of the "Programma" of 1932 was to bring the problem of the peasantry and land-tenure into sharper focus. During the first decades of the twentieth century, the socialists and communists had tended to focus on the industrialized proletariat in the north and the fundamental problems of the vast majority of the population went unheeded. Because of the work of Salvemini,

¹¹⁷Amendola's mission is described in Aldo Agosti, *Rodolfo Morandi. Il pensiero e l'azione politica*. Bari: Laterza, 1971, p. 159.

¹¹⁸"Il programma rivoluzionario di Giustizia e Libertà," in *QGL*, n. 1 January 1932, pp. 1-8. The Program is translated and appears in Appendix C.

¹¹⁹E.R. "Il programma di Giustizia e Libertà," in *Lo Stato Operaio* VI, n. 3, March 1932, pp. 87-89.

Tommaso Fiore and the experience of Carlo Levi, Rosselli and GL had devoted more attention to the south. Now, the PCd'I faced a specific proposal to which it had to respond. The task was given to Ruggero Grieco whose analysis of the *Mezzogiorno* was sophisticated and subtle.¹²⁰ While it had been a commonplace to argue that feudalism continued in the south, Grieco claimed that although there was a residue of feudalism, the essence of the problem was precisely in the tenacity of a usurious capitalism that determined social relations. Also, the plan to confiscate land and re-distribute it to the peasants represented a golden opportunity for speculators; in fact, when, after the Second World War, the new government embarked on a massive program to re-distribute land in the south, this is precisely what happened.¹²¹

But the aspect of GL's agrarian program that aroused the most vehement criticism from socialists and communists alike was the concession to granting an indemnity for confiscated land. Here was proof, charged the communists, of the bourgeois mentality of Rosselli and Giustizia e Libertà. The proposal for the indemnity was later dropped in the summer of 1935.

By September 1932 charges and counter-charges were flying across countries and ideological camps. In a direct reply to Grieco, Rosselli humorously

¹²⁰Ruggero Grieco, "Il programma agrario di Giustizia e Libertà," in *Lo Stato Operaio*, VI, n. 4, April 1932, pp. 157-165; "Il nostro programma contadino e i suoi critici," VI, n. 6, June 1932, pp. 302-10; "Ancora sul programma agrario di Giustizia e Libertà," VI, n. 11, November 1932, pp. 669-677.

¹²¹Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943-1986*, London: Penguin, 1990, pp. 210-253; see also C. Daneo, *Breve storia dell'agricoltura italiana*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1980.

commented on the bitter tone of the debate. In recounting the criticisms levelled by the communists, Rosselli commented that:

We are the "mob" of the Italian bourgeoisie, "bandits," "failures," "shameful," "ignorant," "weak bourgeois," "presumptuous," "servants of the bourgeoisie," "agents of capitalism," "functionaries of capitalism," "people without scientific gravity," without "ambition for research."

We reply with Paul Louis Courier: This man "calls me a plagiarist, thief, poisoner, forger, pestiferous, mad, an impostor, etc. I understand what it all means: it simply means that he and I are of differing opinions; perhaps he's wrong."¹²²

Throughout the 1930s, Rosselli never failed to grant his ideological critics a respect and courtesy that was rarely reciprocated. The communists especially, with perhaps the exception of Amendola, were the most colorful and inventive in their use of insults.

Rosselli defended *Giustizia e Libertà* from the charge that it had a fetish for private property; indeed their position was even more intransigent than the communists. Where they differed was that the socialization desired by GL came from below, through education and experience, not forced from above. This went to the methodological and ideological heart of the matter. "There could be nothing more foolish," Rosselli argued, "more counter-revolutionary, more anti-Marxist, than the desire to pass from the theory to the practice of universal socialization in one blow; just as there is nothing more foolish than the wish to apply to Italy, where the revolution has not begun...discussions that refer to Russia, fifteen years after the revolution."¹²³

¹²²"Discussioni sul programma agrario," in *QGL*, n. 4, September 1932, p. 83.

¹²³*Ibid.*, p. 86.

Russia, of course, was another contentious point between GL and the PCd'I. Rosselli's first analysis of Russia was immediately after the February-March Revolution, admitting the West's ignorance of the Russian people--"a people that spoke in a language of blood."¹²⁴ His own privileged position caused him to be acutely conscious of the vast gulf separating rich and poor in Russia.

In the face of the deepening world-wide economic crisis after 1929, many people had become infatuated with the supposed rational management of the Soviet economy. By 1932, Rosselli could write that the Soviets were "in fashion" and that the mechanics of the Five Year Plans with their new productionist religion were seducing thinkers and politicians in Europe and America. This was a suspect philocommunism; "let us not forget," wrote Rosselli, "that the bourgeois admirers of Stalin and the Five Year Plan are the same people that for ten years have repeated that Mussolini saved Italy and that the trains run on time."¹²⁵

Rosselli's own position concerning the revolution was complex and insightful.¹²⁶ He did not blindly defend the revolution; nor did he dismiss it out of hand. The revolution should not be equated with the Stalin dictatorship. The historical fact remained that the Bolshevik revolution destroyed the czarist regime and had given land to the peasants (only to take it back later). It was this revolution, Rosselli wrote, "that we loved and defended." If a choice had to be

¹²⁴"Libera Russia," in *Noi Giovani* I, n. 4, 24 March 1917.

¹²⁵"Note sulla Russia," in *QGL*, n. 2, March 1932, p. 103.

¹²⁶Zeffiro Ciuffoletti, "Carlo Rosselli, il mito della rivoluzione e il comunismo," in *Il Ponte* XLVIII, n. 5, May 1992, pp. 186-203.

made between the capitalist society and the Bolshevik world, "we must resolve ourselves, not without anguish, for the second."¹²⁷

But it is this alternative that we refute and repulses us; this coarse and brutal dualism--God or the Devil; communism or capitalism. Between God and the Devil, we stand, very simply, for Man. Our effort will be turned toward the overcoming of the disagreement in the name of a synthesis; in the name of a socialism informed by the idea of freedom in which Plans serve men, not where men serve Plans.¹²⁸

The PCd'I responded that "whoever has reservations, whoever protests, whoever is scandalized by some domestic or foreign policy of the USSR...is not a friend of the proletariat, supports reaction, and **is not a true antifascist.**"¹²⁹

The relationship between GL and the PCd'I oscillated from outright hostility to attempts at reconciliation, often depending on international events. Hitler's rise to power and the Ethiopian War were two instances when the rivals sought avenues of cooperation. When the fascist regime announced a military mobilization in anticipation of hostilities in Ethiopia in February 1935, Rosselli sent a letter to the leaders of the PCd'I asking to organize an allied, concerted response. A few months later, after little had been done, he again wrote to socialist and communist leaders, calling for a congress of Italian antifascists, not just to issue the usual "platonic" opposition statement which substituted words for

¹²⁷"Note sulla Russia," p. 104.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 104.

¹²⁹Vit., "Realtà russe e 'ideali' giellisti," in *Lo Stato Operaio* IX, n. 1, January 1935, p. 77.

action, but real work among the masses.¹³⁰ When the PSI and PCd'I met in Brussels on the eve of the Ethiopian war, representatives from *Giustizia e Libertà* did not attend.¹³¹ From Moscow, Togliatti voiced his disagreement, while Luigi Longo tried to persuade GL to join the crusade against the war.¹³² Rosselli sent off two letters in which he advocated the creation of a revolutionary alliance that would undertake extensive propaganda and parallel a "bread-peace-freedom" triad with "freedom-socialism-republic".¹³³ The essence of this new alliance would be 1) the essential work had to take place in Italy; 2) its end was a mass movement; 3) a direct appeal must be made to the entire population; 4) a major point of propaganda was that European fascism was planning a major war; 5) that domestic and exile activities and propaganda be better coordinated and that theory and action be tied closer together.¹³⁴ Yet the response from the PCd'I was cool and the events in Spain were to overshadow even the Ethiopian conflict.

¹³⁰The February letter is in the APC, 1286; the second, "Alle direzioni dei partiti comunista e socialista" (Sezione IOS) dated 16 April 1935 is in APC 1286/1, 11-13. Both are quoted in Agosti, "Il PCI di fronte al movimento di GL," in *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, p. 352.

¹³¹Rosselli outlined his reasons in "Il congresso contro la guerra," in *GL*, 18 October 1935.

¹³²Togliatti's letter, dated the end of October 1935, has been published by F. Ferri, "Unificare tutte le correnti d'opposizione al fascismo," in *Rinascita*, 22 January 1966, p. 10; Gallo's appeal is "Il Congresso di Bruxelles, centro della lotta contro la guerra," in *L'idea popolare*, 26 October 1935.

¹³³Carlo Rosselli, "Alla direzione dei partiti e movimenti alla discussione per l'unità d'azione," 5 December 1935; and "Lettera di GL al PCI," 5 December 1935, AGL, sezione III, fascicolo 2, nn. 40, 41. In April 1935, he had already suggested two names for the proposed new organization, "Fronte Antifascista Rivoluzionario" or "Alleanza Rivoluzionaria Antifascista"; Carlo Rosselli, "Lettera del CC di GL," APC, 1427, 39-45.

¹³⁴Carlo Rosselli letter of 1 May 1935 to Di Vittorio, APC, 1397, 7.

The Ethiopian War and the Spanish Civil War combined to push Rosselli further to the left in an attempt to create a true, revolutionary alliance that would be capable of a mass uprising in Italy.

GL created two publications in order to publicize its ideology and tactics. *Giustizia e Libertà* was published monthly in Paris from November 1929. In May 1934, with the collapse of the Concentrazione Antifascista, *La Libertà* ceased publication and *Giustizia e Libertà* became a weekly.¹³⁵ Carlo had been thinking of such a project as early as March 1931. The idea was to engage in constructive work and the formation of a new elite. In a letter to Nello he wrote that "I don't feel like pursuing a struggle only of action. It is necessary that we justify our ideals and that we prepare a work for the long term."¹³⁶

The newspaper was printed in a large, tabloid format and also in smaller versions, easier to smuggle into Italy. As a weekly, it appeared every Friday and contained an editorial, almost always written by Rosselli, several articles and essays dealing with the situation in Italy and Europe, press clippings from both fascist Italy and the rest of Europe and usually a book review or two. In its format, writing and layout, it was meant to appeal to as wide an audience as

¹³⁵The fascist police managed to confiscate a copy of the letter, signed by Rosselli, Lussu and Tarchiani, that announced the publication of *GL* as a weekly to the antifascist exile community. Letter of 12 May 1934, ACS, Busta 4221, fascicolo 3.

¹³⁶Letter of 4 March 1931; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 519.

possible--students, soldiers, intellectuals, workers, teachers, etc. The title was in red and the masthead carried an image of the Italian peninsula covered by a red torch, symbol of the movement. Its subtitle was "Movimento unitario d'azione per l'autonomia operaio, la repubblica socialista, un nuovo umanesimo."¹³⁷

In January 1934, Rosselli published the first of twelve issues of *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà* (Notebooks of Giustizia e Libertà) which addressed more abstract and theoretical problems of the antifascist resistance.¹³⁸ The *Quaderni* appeared every three to four months, until January 1935. Rosselli was responsible for each issue and it was not unusual for the lead editorial to be written by him, along with a shorter article and possibly a book review. Each issue was divided into sections that carried articles and essays, another that reproduced documents, one that was devoted to polemics with other antifascist groups, and a section for book reviews. In early 1933, Rosselli prepared a report given to the Central Committee of GL concerning the first six issues of the *Quaderni*: by issue 6, the circulation had increased to 2,000 copies, with 600 copies for an Italian edition, 200 of the foreign edition camouflaged for smuggling into Italy and 1200 copies

¹³⁷"United Movement of Action for Workers' Autonomy, a Socialist Republic a New Humanism:" after Rosselli's death in 1937, this was changed to "Movimento di Unificazione Socialista," reflecting the changed ideology of the movement. Annual subscription rates were 25 francs for France and its colonies; 50 francs in other countries. The first editorial and administrative office was located at 8 Rue Jolivet in the 14th arrondissement; later the newspaper would move to 21, Rue Val-de-Grâce in the 5th arrondissement.

¹³⁸The *Quaderni* are were printed in two series, the first 6 from January 1932 to March 1933, with a gray cover; and a second series from June 1933 until January 1935, with a red cover. They are conserved in the AGL in Florence and were re-printed as *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, with a foreword by Alessandro Galante Garrone and an Introduction by Alberto Tarchiani, Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1959 and 1975. The best study on the subject is Santi Fedele, *E verrà un'altra Italia: Politica e cultura nei "Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà"*, Milan: Franco Angeli, 1992.

for France, Europe and the Americas. 200 libraries began receiving the fifth issue and the total expenses for the first six issues amounted to 37,000 francs.¹³⁹ The *Quaderni* were created to clarify the "spiritual and ideological physiognomy" of the movement and proved to be highly effective in this regard. Much had changed in Italy and Europe since the imposition of the dictatorship in 1925-26. Significantly, much of the youth of Italy had come to political consciousness under the regime. The main task therefore was to increase and develop a plan of political education and propaganda directed at these youths.

It would be an error to depend too much on men 35, 40 or 50 years old. Besides the ones that are in prison, on the islands, abroad, the others are all or almost all in a state of depression and painful skepticism. It is on the youth, above all the youth, that we must depend for the development of our movement. Whoever manages in these decisive years to gain the youth, will control the revolutionary situation tomorrow.¹⁴⁰

That this was the proper course of action was proved, in Rosselli's eyes, by how the communists were criticizing the new movement. *Giustizia e Libertà* was handicapped by what Rosselli called "the lack of a myth, or if you wish, *un'idea forza* capable of influencing and attracting the youth, that permits us to speak a language completely geared toward the future."

¹³⁹Carlo Rosselli, report to the Central Committee of *Giustizia e Libertà*, in AGL, sezione III, fascicolo I, documento 12. Partially reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio*, I, pp. 196-202. Rosselli financed much of the cost of the *Quaderni* that was not covered by the subscriptions.

¹⁴⁰*Scritti dell'esilio* I, p. 199.

Liberalismo Rivoluzionario

The inaugural issue of the *Quaderni* contained, besides Rosselli's draft of a program and the "Chiaramenti al programma," his provocative essay in the spirit of Gobetti entitled "Liberalismo Rivoluzionario."¹⁴¹ Here again was an impassioned plea and rational argument for the revolutionary potential of liberalism--a liberalism that was forged out of the constant exercise of consciousness and existing as a force of the spirit before it was a force of politics. The liberal, sure in the use of the tool of reason, is not a skeptic, nor passive. In the classic eighteenth century Enlightenment tradition, the liberal is a firm believer in the human spirit, that proclaims man as the only end, and that has a faith in the perfectibility of the human race. At the same time, the liberal is driven by an awareness that this blessed state has never been reached and might possibly never be reached. In short, the liberal is *tout court* modern man.

Rosselli moved beyond the earliest formulations of liberalism in affirming that liberalism could not exist in reference to individuals alone. Since man is a political and social animal, the concept of liberty is necessarily a social one. Defending liberalism against the charge that it is elitist or "aristocratic," Rosselli claimed that all ideologies, including Christianity and Marxism, in their initial forms, are aristocratic. The factor that determines whether an ideology is democratic or aristocratic lies not in its comprehensibility but in its function of

¹⁴¹"Liberalismo Rivoluzionario," in *QGL*, n. 1 January 1932, pp. 25-29.

serving the masses, of generating action and changing consciousness. Marxism generates its élan not with its theory of surplus value but with the concept of class struggle and the impetus of the *Communist Manifesto*; liberalism creates a force through its call to freedom, "leaven of history." All the active, revolutionary forces of history are, by definition, liberal. The early Christians, the Protestants, the Encyclopedists, were all at one time liberals; so too the bourgeoisie, at one time fulfilled the role of a liberating class against the absolutism of the monarchy and the dogmatism of the Church. Yet now, the bourgeoisie had lost its liberal spirit and force. It no longer had a thirst for progress nor was it animated by a universal ideal. It sought to arrest the historical process at the present state, conserving its privileges with a recourse to violence.

A new force arises to contest this sclerotic, petrified bourgeois liberalism-- a proletarian liberalism. The proletariat is the "only modern revolutionary class;" liberalism and socialism, instead of opposing each other, are by now tied in a theoretical and practical relationship: "liberalism is the inspiring ideal force, while socialism is the practical, realizing force."¹⁴²

Rosselli though, was careful not to fall into theoretical absolutes concerning class and human nature which he recognized as mutable, paradoxical and sometimes even contradictory. Human beings cannot be completely explained by reference to social and economic class. An individual can be conservative and revolutionary, dogmatic and liberal. "The bourgeoisie, almost always conservative

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 26.

concerning economic relations, is now almost always more liberal than the proletariat in the domain of culture and customs."¹⁴³ Yet even this picture must be qualified since there are strata of the bourgeoisie that act as catalysts of social and economic liberalism; many intellectuals and most of the leaders of the socialist and communist movements in Europe were from the middle class. In contrast, fascism had shown that considerable segments of the proletariat, because of their material and spiritual servitude, were easy prey for reactionary regimes. This was another of Rosselli's heretical positions. Yet this does not invalidate the larger thesis: the majority of the proletarian forces are liberal; while the majority of the bourgeoisie had accepted dictatorship and reaction.

Rosselli must defend the historical function of freedom from the communists, who he feels see the struggle for freedom as a conservative distraction to the primary goal of the socialist revolution. The communists failed to recognize that the struggle for freedom was essential, not an "idealist abstraction in the service of the bourgeoisie;" they confused contemporary liberals like Rosselli with the older, conservative liberals. Communists insisted that man, by definition, was not free; tied as he was to the forms of economic production and distribution and the social relations they engender. The Marxist catechism, which underestimates the importance of freedom, is "morphine for the proletariat in a bourgeois society...it is a class concept, and therefore historical, relative and

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 27.

provisional."¹⁴⁴ Concrete liberties such as freedom of the individual, of the press, of association, of emigration, are "bourgeois sorcery," while those who fight for the freedom of all individuals and classes are "reactionary" and "socialfascists."

...this critique is sterile. It is, among other things, contradictory. On the one hand, the communists hold that the bourgeoisie must suppress all liberties to conserve its domination and theorize fascism as the characteristic form of the bourgeois regime. On the other hand, they accuse the antifascist who struggles for concrete freedoms denied by the bourgeoisie of serving the reaction, that is, serving the bourgeoisie. The communists must decide. If the bourgeoisie is fascist, we, in as much as we are antifascist, are also anti-bourgeoisie. Or the bourgeoisie is not necessarily fascist, and then the communist model collapses.¹⁴⁵

The communists were correct in pointing out that the bourgeoisie was increasingly abandoning the liberal method; but what does this signify other than that function was now passing to the proletariat? In this sense the communists lacked a sense of history: the freedoms acquired and conquered by the bourgeoisie in the struggle against the aristocracy can today be the tools and patrimony of the proletariat.

What then, were the tasks of a new revolutionary movement? In one essay, Rosselli declared three areas that were of supreme importance: the formation of cadres, work among the masses and a certain type of action.¹⁴⁶ The Russian Revolution proved that a decisive, disciplined and revolutionary minority could be successful. This nucleus need not be conceived of as a romantic, heroic elite,

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 28-29.

¹⁴⁶"La situazione italiana e i compiti del nostro movimento," in *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 5, December 1932, pp. 1-13.

distanced from the masses, but rather as an avant-garde whose function would be to mediate between the minority and the masses. In fact, the first sign of class consciousness consists in the capacity for creating leaders. These leading cadres must not be tyrannical nor despotic nor centralizers of power; instead, they are to use the socratic, liberal method to inspire the masses. Rosselli recognized that "the most delicate problem that confronts the movement is that of creating and maintaining a constant psychological and actual bond between the avant-garde and the masses."¹⁴⁷ Without the constant and reciprocal relationship, the avant-garde becomes a sect, impervious to everything else and cuts itself off from the revolutionary process. Finally, actions were necessary which would capture the imagination and admiration of the people. The force of *Giustizia e Libertà* resided in the fact that "it was able to create a new type of movement, closely tied to the Italian spirit and the demands of the situation. It is able to organically combine virile revolutionary realism and romantic passion. Without this overwhelming passion, nothing serious and lasting can be accomplished in life, nothing. And even less in a revolution."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 13.

Pro o contro il partito

One of the most contested aspects of *Giustizia e Libertà* was whether this new entity was a political party and, if not, whether it should transform itself into a new political party. Rosselli had been very clear from the beginning: GL was to be a new, revolutionary movement, and its members were asked to put away party cards and dedicate themselves to an inclusive, antifascist movement fighting for a democratic, socialist republic. *Giustizia e Libertà* was born outside the traditional political parties because of Rosselli's critique of their inactivity and failed ideology, and because under the dictatorship it was impossible to conduct the fight against fascism in any other manner. The party is, by definition, the fruit of liberty. It is a delicate instrument. Where there exists no freedom of the press, of association, of organization, the party cannot exist. "If fascism has triumphed, it was not because of Divine Providence, as the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church say, but because State, government and parties had within themselves, the reasons for the crisis...To believe that the end of fascism will come from the metamorphosis and action of the political parties is absurd."¹⁴⁹ What remained in Italy were isolated groups of men who managed to conserve their dignity and a certain capacity for struggle; beside them were a minority of younger, more audacious Italians, with an immense potential. It was to these groups that GL

¹⁴⁹ Carlo Rosselli, "Il nostro movimento e i partiti," in *GL*, n. 10, September 1930; AGL, sezione IV, fascicolo 2, sottofascicolo 1, inserto 1, #3. Now in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 13-15; also in Elena Aga Rossi, *Il movimento repubblicano, Giustizia e Libertà e il Partito d'Azione*, Bologna: Cappelli, 1969, pp. 98-100.

appealed.

Yet the older parties were not convinced. The PSI, the PCd'I and the PRI all felt that GL was either already a new political party or had the intention of transforming itself into a rival on the political stage. Characteristically, Rosselli opened the pages of both *Giustizia e Libertà* and the *Quaderni* to those that disagreed with his position on this matter, both within the movement and those from the older, traditional parties. For example, Augusto Monti who had collaborated with Gobetti on *Rivoluzione liberale*, was the teacher of Cesare Pavese and arrested on 15 May 1935, argued that GL, with a program and a coherent ideology, was already a political party--a new Italian socialist party. Another tact was taken by Lelio Basso who held that GL was still too inconsistent and hazy in its ideology; it had to delineate its position and carve out space for itself on the political spectrum.¹⁵⁰

Rosselli decided to respond to their ideas in August 1933 in the lead essay of the eighth issue of the *Quaderni*.¹⁵¹ After acknowledging the criticism of both Monti and Basso, he delineated the essential characteristics of the modern political party:

...that which constitutes the definitive, peculiar character of the modern political party...is the fact that it cannot be conceived except in opposition to other political parties within a certain common political climate, which is the liberal climate of the nineteenth century...the concept of the "party" presupposes that of political

¹⁵⁰"Veturio" (Augusto Monti), "Consensi a Tirreno," in *QGL*, n. 5, December 1932, pp. 14-21; "S.D." (Lelio Basso), "Il partito, ma in Italia," in *QGL*, n. 7, June 1933, pp. 105-09.

¹⁵¹"Pro o contro il partito," in *QGL* n. 8, August 1933, pp. 3-12; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 215-225.

struggle, of liberty and autonomy. A party does not exist where political parties do not exist; a party does not exist and cannot exist where political struggle does not exist; and political struggle does not exist where there is no freedom. All the political parties of our time...were born in a liberal climate. with the assertion of fundamental liberties, such as the press and association...¹⁵²

Rosselli insisted that all modern political parties were, in fact, miniature reproductions of the Liberal State in which they were formed; they were, in microcosm, "working democracies" with elected officials, legislative and executive branches, freedom of discussion, etc. The modern political party can be conceived only inside the State, even if its ultimate aim is the overthrow of that State. By rising to power, the party changes the nature of the State. "If, instead, the party is completely outside the State, it is in flagrant contradiction to the State, and in no way concurs with it; one no longer has a party, but a revolutionary movement, an anti-State."¹⁵³ By this criterion, the fascist party in Italy, the Nazi party in Germany and the Communist party in Russia are not really political parties, even if they call themselves such. Because they are single, totalitarian entities, they do not see themselves as "part of a whole, a moment in the dialect of political forces, but as the whole, as the State. They are, therefore, States--anti-liberal, antipolitical, that do not admit political parties, nor political struggle, and that logically designate their opponents as anti-state..."¹⁵⁴

Rosselli never abandoned or modified this conception of *Giustizia e Libertà*

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

as a revolutionary, transgressive, "anti-state." Fascist totalitarianism forces a diverse type of confrontation; after the defeat of fascism a return to the older political order might be possible, and only then will it be time to discuss whether GL should become a political party. Until that time, the movement must remain as conceived by Rosselli--"the complete and revolutionary negation of fascism." Is the movement then condemned to be, in the words of Basso, "the democratic-republican-socialist cauldron of unhappy Aventine memory?" Rosselli refuted this in no uncertain terms: Giustizia e Libertà was born as the absolute negation of the old mentality that led to the Aventine Secession. And in perhaps his most succinct attempt at definition:

If we had to define Giustizia e Libertà with a formula, we would say that it is, or aspires to be, the anticipation in microcosm of the new, integrally liberal State of tomorrow, of the new world of justice and freedom that will arise from the revolution; the explosive cell of a future society in the present society. The problem for us is to force ourselves to give life to this State, this new world, starting today, in its essential motives, within our movement, not by imposing a sectarian party discipline and a rigid body of doctrine, but by giving life and vigor from within to all autonomies, the greatest freedoms of research and discussion, educating the Italians, and above all ourselves, in the dignity of political struggle. To be even clearer, we would say that we conceive Giustizia e Libertà as the free federation of the nuclei that will be the parties of *tomorrow*.¹⁵⁵

Fascism

...fascism does not exhaust itself in a fact of simple class reaction. It is accompanied by such a complex of factors, especially moral, that it assumes the character of a real and true "national crisis." The causes of this crisis are many; but it is certain that they involve the entire life of the nation, proletariat included.

¹⁵⁵"Pro o contro il partito," p. 9, emphasis in the original.

Fascism does not only offend the rights of one class for the benefit of another class. It offends modern civilization, the rights of the human personality, the most elementary sense of morality and humanity. The division between fascists and antifascists is not determined only on the basis of class relations; there is, between fascists and antifascists a difference of moral sensibility...which gives the struggle for freedom an almost religious value.¹⁵⁶

Rosselli's analysis of fascism derived in large part from Piero Gobetti. As such, it was idiosyncratic, heterogeneous, "heretical," above all in his insistence that fascism could not be explained simply as class reaction. For this, he suffered the wrath of the communists and orthodox socialists. He also challenged the liberal interpretation as formulated by Croce that fascism was a "parenthesis" in the unfolding of liberty in Italian history.

Fascism represented something radically new in the history of political organization. The supremely repugnant fact about fascism was not its suppression of freedom--something common to all tyrannies in history--but in the creation of "a fabric of consensus, in the active servility that it demands from its subjects." Mussolini had the Italians under a "sadistic subjugation. I enslave you and you must tell me that you freely accept being a slave; you must proclaim, after Gentile, of being a free slave."¹⁵⁷

Rosselli had already developed a provocative understanding of fascism in

¹⁵⁶"Birba" (Carlo Rosselli) to "Campana" (Rodolfo Morandi), letter of September-October 1931; quoted in Stefano Merli, "Il dibattito socialista sotto il fascismo. Lettere di Rodolfo Morandi e Carlo Rosselli (1928-1931)," in *Rivista Storica del Socialismo* VI, n. 19, May-August 1963, pp. 317-348.

¹⁵⁷Carlo Rosselli, notes for a meeting of the Central Committee of GL, 1932, AGL; quoted in Nicola Tranfaglia, *Labirinto italiano: il fascismo, l'antifascismo, gli storici*, Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1989, p. 197.

Liberal Socialism. The Italian people had been passive subjects of their history; the intervention of a *deus ex machina*--Pope, King or Duce--answered a psychological need. "From this point of view the Mussolini government is anything but revolutionary. It is linked to the tradition and proceeds along the line of least resistance. Fascism, all appearances to the contrary, is the most passive development in Italian history." In words that directly echoed the martyred Gobetti, Rosselli pointed out that:

Fascism has in some sense been the autobiography of a nation that rejects the political contest, that worships unanimity, and shrinks from heresy... ¹⁵⁸

Perhaps Rosselli's most penetrating and prophetic analysis of fascism and the one that generated the most commentary among European antifascists was his essay "La guerra che torna."¹⁵⁹ ["War Returns"]. Rosselli clearly saw that Hitler's ascension to power on 10 January 1933 radically changed the nature of politics on the continent and posed a threat to all of Western civilization. Between 1922-1933, fascism could be conceived of as the "autobiography" of Italy; National Socialism in Germany meant that fascism was a European, and not just an Italian phenomenon.

Rosselli challenged the pacifists and their refusal to recognize that their

¹⁵⁸*Liberal Socialism*, p. 104.

¹⁵⁹"La guerra che torna," in *QGL*, n. 9, November 1933, pp. 1-8; reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 250-258. A year later, Rosselli quoted Mussolini's speech from atop a tank during military exercises near Florence: "The entire structure of the State, of the party, the very conception of totalitarian politics, the economic directives, the battle for grain, cannot be explained except as a precise blueprint for war." Benito Mussolini, in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 28 August 1934; now in Mussolini, *Opera Omnia*, vol. XXVI, 1958, pp. 306-309. The quote appears in Rosselli, "L'asino di Buridano. (L'invito a smobilitare)," in *GL*, 14 December 1934. It was Mussolini who coined the phrase, "War is to man as maternity is to woman."

faith in peace had to be questioned. He was especially harsh towards the French socialists and their policy, even after Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations in October. The paradox was that those who had worked so hard against fascism and those who had already made the equation that fascism = war were now reluctant to draw the logical conclusions from this new development in Germany.

At the cost of being misunderstood and stoned to death, we wish to say what all have in their heart since Hitler came to power in Germany: the illusion of peace is ended...Peace returns to that which it has always been in history: a negative and precarious state, a parenthesis between two wars, a war, as Clausewitz said, that continues under other forms.¹⁶⁰

Hitler's Germany in 1933 may have still been militarily weak, but it abounded in audacity, desperation, and folly. Not only was its "socialism" a "war socialism," its ideology was pangermanism rather than socialist internationalism. Rosselli saw immediately that Hitler would drag Germany "into the very depths of the abyss."

Without a complete reversal, war is coming, war will come. It will come because it is inevitable that the same causes produce the same effects; because millions of youths have been raised in the delirium of war, because fascism, master of half a continent, will be dragged into it as the ultimate test, because poverty and hunger have always been, as Proudhon taught us, the most powerful motives for war, because the struggle between fascism and antifascism appeals to the judgment of God, because the old Europe that we believed dead and buried with the ten million who died on the battlefields, rises again.¹⁶¹

It may be two, five or ten years, but eventually Germany will become powerful enough to challenge all of Europe. Rosselli theorized that war might break out among the signers of the Treaty of Versailles, as a "large international police action." A preventive war, as some were advocating, had little chance of

¹⁶⁰Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

becoming reality. Although Rosselli agreed that a preventive war could prevent a longer, more bloody catastrophe, the reality of domestic and international politics in democratic countries like England and France made such a scenario unlikely. Public opinion in those countries would be against any war and there was no possibility of fighting a war in the name of the Versailles Treaty which in the words of Rosselli was "condemned in the consciences of the people," and would isolate France rather than Germany.

Until now, antifascism had been completely defensive, caught in a siege mentality, clear only about what it was against. The only possibility to prevent a European bloodbath in the future was a revolutionary intervention in Germany, tied to revolution in other parts of Europe. These were dreams, admitted Rosselli; the Western democracies were not made of such stuff. Revolutionary democratic socialists were lacking in France and England; instead, they clung to the formula of non-intervention.

Non-intervention? Since when have revolutionaries raised the banner of non-intervention? Since when have they affirmed that tyrannies, even if based on centuries of tradition and a passive consensus, were the domestic affairs of a people? The authentic revolutions, those that aspire to a universal principle, were always interventionist...¹⁶²

The antifascists will be accused of instigating war believing that only by war could fascism be defeated. Rosselli anticipated this criticism and responded that it was fascism and not antifascism that was responsible for the coming war. "We would prefer to be bad prophets, but we feel that already today, part of the

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 6.

German people that is fanaticized by Hitler will go to war with frenzy, with joy..." The rhetoric, the symbolism and the mindset fostered in fascist Italy would also send a part of Italian youth off to war in exaltation. In 1932, on the tenth anniversary of the "March on Rome," machine-guns were solemnly presented to the avant-garde fascist youth not as a commemoration of the past but an augury of the future.

War is coming, war will come. There is only one way to think about it: it must be prevented. Prevent it with a resolute action, with a revolutionary intervention in those countries where fascism dominates and overthrow it with a civil war.¹⁶³

And yet Rosselli had no illusions that such a policy would be enacted. The tragedy was that when the catastrophe arrived, it was too late to do anything about it. For the small band of antifascist revolutionaries, the path was clear: "We will not retire in pilgrimage to the wall of lamentations; nor will we resign ourselves to the fascist war. We will serve the war against fascism. We will transform the fascist war into a social revolution."¹⁶⁴ Rosselli was suggesting nothing less than a preemptive, revolutionary strike against Hitler and Mussolini.¹⁶⁵

Again, Rosselli had touched a raw nerve among his antifascist collaborators. The socialists critically responded almost in unison.¹⁶⁶ Nenni

¹⁶³Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

¹⁶⁵Garosci, *Vita* II, pp. 23-25.

¹⁶⁶"Alfa", (P. Rugginenti), "I socialisti e la guerra," in *Avanti! (L'Avvenire del Lavoratore)*, 16 December 1933; Pietro Nenni, "Contro l'illusione della guerra rivoluzionaria e per la libertà," in *ibid.*, 2 December 1933 and reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 312-316; Pietro Nenni, "L'Internazionale e la guerra," in *ibid.*, 23 December 1933.

answered that he felt that "Hannibal was not at the gates," that perhaps Giustizia e Libertà was exaggerating the danger, the edifice of peace was not collapsing and that the intervention advocated by Rosselli would inevitably degenerate into an "imperialist intervention." War for Nenni could never be revolutionary, nor democratic; it was by its very nature reactionary. The duty of socialists was to oppose war wherever and whenever it might break out. Modigliani concurred; only Giuseppe Saragat among the socialists was willing to suspend judgement and admit the possibility that Rosselli might be right. Rosselli's advocacy of a preventive, revolutionary, European war was another obstacle in the relationship with the Concentrazione Antifascista and the exile community.

Rosselli responded in a letter to Nenni that until March 1933, he agreed with his position; but fascism in Germany had radically changed the equation. The antifascists were caught in a Catch-22: to prevent war meant first and above all to defeat fascism on the continent; to defeat fascism meant war. "It seems to me that you remain strangely indifferent to the catastrophe that threatens, to the fascist wave that submerges all peoples one after the other, to the collapse of a willful, active politics of the Left, of revolutionary socialism. According to you, there is nothing to be done."¹⁶⁷

If any doubt remained concerning the brutal nature of Hitler's regime, it was dissipated on 30 June 1934, in the "Night of Long Knives" massacre of Ernst Roehm, chief of staff of the SA, and his associates. The bloody German "purge"

¹⁶⁷Carlo Rosselli to Pietro Nenni, letter of 23 December 1933, printed in *Avanti! (L'Avvenire del Lavoratore)*, 30 December 1933; reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 259-64.

had an admonishing historical value: it demonstrated the real substance of the fascist dictatorships--they rested on a political and moral foundation of "blood and depravity."¹⁶⁸

Fascism had been victorious in Europe because of the weakness of the opposition and its lack of new, innovative ideas and ideals. Fascism had an immense technical and psychological superiority, while the rest of Europe witnessed the collapse of the old world and its ruling class in a twilight of ideas. "Fascism is the child of a corrupt and weak democracy. And like a good child, it buries the father."¹⁶⁹ While not denying the seriousness of Hitler's rise to power, Rosselli ridiculed the western democracies' cringing attitude before the new Germany. This sense of inferiority rested on the fact that the western states no longer believed in their fundamental principles and myths. Germany's power rested not so much in her military, but in the Nazi mystique.¹⁷⁰

Events in Europe were pointing toward a final crisis of democracy. In February 1934, a right-wing *coup d'état* was narrowly defeated as Parisians took to the streets chanting "Better Hitler than Blum!"¹⁷¹ The French socialists were divided¹⁷² because of the heresies propounded by the "neo-socialists" Déat,

¹⁶⁸Carlo Rosselli, "Depravazione e sangue," in *GL*, 6 July 1934; reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 21-24.

¹⁶⁹Carlo Rosselli, "Come vince il fascismo," in *GL*, 22 March 1935.

¹⁷⁰"Europeismo o fascismo," in *GL*, 17 May 1935.

¹⁷¹See Rosselli's letter of 9 February 1934; now in *Epistolario familiare*, pp. 560-61.

¹⁷²For the divisions hampering the French socialists, see John T. Marcus, *French Socialism in the Crisis Years, 1933-1936: Fascism and the French Left*, New York: Praeger, 1958.

Marquet and Montagnon. Marcel Déat was, like Blum, a graduate of the prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure; Adrien Marquet was mayor of Bordeaux and Montagnon a former communist. Rosselli, ever ready to question established ideological truths, devoted several essays¹⁷³ to defending the "neos," a fact which was not forgotten later when their fascist sympathies became clear. The "neos" were serving a vital function in pointing out the persistence of nationalism as a potent, perhaps the most potent, ideology in the 1930s and the persistence of the capitalist system. Contrary to communist and orthodox socialist ideology which saw fascism as the last gasp of a decadent capitalist order, the neo-socialists insisted that the bourgeoisie was stronger than ever and that capitalism was transforming itself into an economic entity that could be flexible and survive the present crisis. European socialists ignored this at their peril and lacked the courage to admit this reality. For Rosselli, there was in Europe a deadly and dangerous conservatism: the ideological conservatism of the antifascists.¹⁷⁴ The resulting paralysis only played into the hands of the fascists. This allowed fascism to reverse roles and present itself as an innovative force, while the antifascists were trapped in their orthodox ideologies. The "neos" were accused of being heretics and fascists. "We can be heretics," Rosselli countered, "without being

¹⁷³Carlo Rosselli, "Il neo-socialismo francese," in *La Libertà*, 17 August 1933; "Lo spirito e i fini del neo-socialismo francese," *ibid.*, 24 August 1933; "Il neo-socialismo francese nel quadro internazionale," *ibid.*, 31 August 1933; all are now in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 226-243; and "Ancora sul neo-socialismo francese," *ibid.*, 14 December 1933; in AGL, sezione II, fascicolo 22, n. 2. See also "Due Congressi: SFIO-Neos," in *GL*, 1 June 1934; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 7-10.

¹⁷⁴Paris was a "museum of antifascism." "1935," in *QGL*, n. 12, January 1935, p. 3.

fascists; indeed, the only serious way to be antifascist is to be heretical..."¹⁷⁵

Even more fundamental for Rosselli, the true heart of the matter, was not so much whether the "neos" were correct in their interpretations, but in the response of the other socialists and the conception of the revolutionary struggle. It was an historical error to transform the political party into a sect, a Church, a depositary of eternal and immutable truths. The political party was an instrument for relative and contingent ends, prepared to work for an indefinite series of economic and social changes. With the exception of the Labour Party in England, all socialist parties have delineated a credo that can not be challenged without calling into question their entire ideological edifice.

The depression that was sweeping across Europe after the Wall Street crash of 1929 had economically destroyed the middleclass in Germany, yet it refused to become "proletarianized"--to become the passive instrument of dialectical materialism, and had gone on the attack "using the most bestial forms, armed with all the rancid prejudices of race and caste, with a primitive violence..." Throughout Europe, the middle class constituted the directive force, "the sinewy tissue of society," not only because of its economic position, but because of its social function. "Without its active participation, no great movement appears possible, no great movement has been created in the 19th and 20th centuries."¹⁷⁶ For all the important movements of modern history, the

¹⁷⁵"Il neo-socialismo francese," in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, pp. 226-27.

¹⁷⁶"Lo spirito e i fini del neo-socialismo francese," in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, p. 235.

bourgeoisie had been the decisive force. It was time to abandon the Marxist belief in the intransigent and historically bankrupt bourgeoisie. For socialism and antifascism to succeed, an alliance had to be forged between the proletariat and the enlightened elements of the bourgeoisie. The experience of Europe in the 1920s and 1930s gave ample proof that the proletariat was not in a position to gain power either through legal or illegal means.

Rosselli had allowed Déat to publish an article in the *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà* in which the French neo-socialist had urged a "national socialism" as the means for "blocking the path of fascism."¹⁷⁷ The reality of early twentieth century Europe was the dominance of a neo-mercantilism, a permeating nationalism and an entrenched bourgeoisie. This was the reality, not the prophecies of the *Communist Manifesto* and if capitalism sought refuge in nationalism, socialism had to follow and attack it on a national level. The neo-socialists suggested the impossibility of international socialist action in the present context, yet demanded some action, with all its risks and limitations. "I confess,"

¹⁷⁷Marcel Déat, "Come sbarremo la strada al fascismo," in *QGL*, n. 8 August 1933, pp. 21-30. The article was preceded by the following editorial note:

The recent Congress of the French Socialist Party has had a very great echo in Italy where fascist pamphlets quickly baptized the conceptions of the young leaders Deat, Montagnon and Marquet "fascist."

We have deemed it appropriate to ask Marcel Deat, one of the intellectuals most involved in French socialism, to explain to Italian antifascists his position and that of his group with the aim of thwarting the fascist speculation that seeks invariably to palm off as fascistic every movement that affirms the necessity of revision and the urgent need for action...

Rosselli concluded, "that I agree with them."¹⁷⁸

This obsession with renewing socialism, with trying to find some way out of the impotence of international socialism, can explain Rosselli's attraction to the French neo-socialist position. Impatient with the governing socialism of Blum, and willing to break the taboo of pacifism, Rosselli left himself vulnerable to ferocious criticism once again; yet he seemed to invite it, anxious to use the polemics to push the socialists and antifascists to reconsider their political assumptions. Yet the "neos" were advocating a state socialism, something that Rosselli had always opposed and their slogan--*ordre, autorité, nation*--was appropriated from the rhetoric of the Right.

Unification of the Italian Proletariat

Rosselli's last theoretical project was a series of five essays devoted to the goal of the political unification of the Italian proletariat.¹⁷⁹ The essays clearly reveal that the experience of the Spanish Civil War and the evolution of developments in Europe had pushed Rosselli further to the left in his thinking.

¹⁷⁸"Il neo-socialismo francese nel quadro internazionale," in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, p. 241.

¹⁷⁹The five essays were published in the spring of 1937 in *Giustizia e Libertà* and all were titled "Per l'unificazione politica del proletariato italiano;" they were subtitled I. "Sguardo insieme," 19 March; II. "Un ostacolo da superare," 26 March; III. "Il partito comunista," 9 April; IV. "I partiti socialisti," 23 April 1937; V. "Giustizia e Libertà," 14 May. All except #II are reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 480-537, passim.

While previously he had insisted that an enlightened, minority fraction of the bourgeoisie would lead the socialist revolution, that vital role now passed to the proletariat in light of the irreparable crisis of capitalism and the moral/political failure of the European middle class to prevent the rise and spread of fascism. Still, he never accepted a rigidly class-based definition of fascism, even in his last and most radical phase.¹⁸⁰

The aim of unifying all the political currents of the proletariat in order to forge a truly effective revolutionary force was of the utmost importance. In effect, the essays were the culmination of Rosselli's political thinking and activity since 1925 and the work of *Non Mollare!* in Florence. Throughout all the developments of the fascist period, from the declaration of the totalitarian state in January 1925 to the formation of Giustizia e Libertà to the Ethiopian and Spanish Civil Wars, Rosselli had insisted on the creation of a united, revolutionary front against Mussolini's regime. This could only come about after the unification of the proletariat; after nearly a decade and a half of fascism, the present situation of nearly half a dozen political parties vying for the allegiance of the working class was self-destructive.¹⁸¹ In the face of totalitarian oppression, there was no valid reason why ideological differences--bordering on theological disputations--should

¹⁸⁰"Per l'unificazione politica del proletariato italiano, I, Sguardo insieme," in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, p. 484.

¹⁸¹In early 1937, there were five major political parties who presented themselves as "the party of the proletariat:" Partito Socialista dei Lavoratori Italiani (PSLI), Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI), Partito Comunista d'Italia (PCd'I), Azione Repubblicana Socialista (ARS), and Giustizia e Libertà.

perpetuate these divisions. The advantages in combining forces would outweigh any inconsistencies or sacrifices in ideological purity. In fact, the theoretical mutations that had taken place within the PSI and the PCd'I over the last few years had rendered the rationale for the schism of 1921 at Livorno obsolete. The two parties had already forged a "pact of unity and action," but of limited scope. Would it not be possible to strengthen and expand that pact? *Giustizia e Libertà* was open to such efforts and willing to make "reasonable concessions."¹⁸² In a sign of his continued insistence on the complex nature of fascism and yet his desire to mend fences with the communists, Rosselli ended the first essay in the series with the following words:

Fascism is not only ferocious class reaction. It is the social destruction of all classes and all values. The central, directing force of the working class must utilize all its forces and all its effective reasons of revolt against fascism, inspired by the vision of Marx who saw in the emancipation of the working class the emancipation of the entire human race.¹⁸³

The communists' dynamic potential and rapprochement with the socialists in the face of the Hitler threat made them more attractive to Rosselli after 1936. At the same time, dissension was growing between Rosselli and the socialists since the latter felt themselves to be the only party that could claim to be both democratic and socialist, a claim also made by GL. In 1936-37, Rosselli was prepared to work more with the dynamic PCd'I than the PSI, which he felt to be moribund.

¹⁸²"Per l'unificazione politica del proletariato italiano," p. 483.

¹⁸³*Ibid.*, p. 484.

The second essay in the series¹⁸⁴ moved beyond the polite generalities of the first to address the problem of how to reach the masses who had been manipulated by more than a decade of fascist propaganda and socialization.¹⁸⁵ Another problem was to disassociate the antifascist present and future from the pre-fascist past. This, as we have already seen, was part of Rosselli's thinking from the days of the Aventine Secession in 1924. Looking to the past and its political formulations would cripple the antifascist cause and effectively prevent transforming antifascism into a revolutionary program for a republican, democratic and socialist Italy in the future.

The reconciliation between the PSI and the PCd'I that was praised in the first essay came under more critical scrutiny in the second. After 1921, both parties had developed their own structures, organizations and cadres which they would be unwilling to renounce. The reconciliation therefore was ineffective, brought about because each side perceived its own weakness and continued to conceive of the problem of the political party as the problem of formulating ideology at the center and diffusing it out to members and the masses. In reality, according to Rosselli, the real problem was to perceive the political party as the vehicle for effecting the antifascist revolution. As an oblique criticism of the

¹⁸⁴"Per l'unificazione politica del proletariato italiano, II. Un ostacolo da superare," *GL*, 26 March 1937.

¹⁸⁵For the techniques, plans and operations of fascist socialization, see Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922-1943*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985. On the question of the creation of a regime of "consent" see Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso: Fascismo e mass media*, and Victoria De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization and Leisure in Fascist Italy*.

communists, he insisted that the proletarian revolution was not simply a matter of economic emancipation, but the formation and implementation of an "integral humanism" and that "today we are all infinitely more sensitive than twenty years ago to the problems of freedom, democracy and even morality and culture..."¹⁸⁶

The third essay in the series was a balanced, and on the whole, rather positive examination of the history of the PCd'I, "the most conspicuous force" among the Italian proletariat.¹⁸⁷ The communists had displayed admirable courage and determination after the advent of fascism, especially after the imposition of the dictatorship in 1925 and the Exceptional Laws of 1926. They carried on the struggle with "admirable energy" and even if their autonomy could be questioned, there was no denying their "moral and combative valor." Also there was no doubt that "if fascism fell today, it would be the strongest proletarian party."¹⁸⁸

One of the strongest criticisms that could be brought against the PCd'I was its theoretical formulation of the doctrine of "socialfascism."¹⁸⁹ With the aim of destroying any potential rival for the allegiance of the working class, the communists deemed all the various currents of democratic socialism as "deviant," "petite-bourgeois" and "servants of the fascists." Any accord with the forces of

¹⁸⁶"Per l'unificazione politica del proletariato italiano," p 486.

¹⁸⁷"Per l'unificazione politica del proletariato italiano, III. Il partito comunista," *GL*, 9 April 1937; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 485-90.

¹⁸⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 485-86.

¹⁸⁹The party dropped the doctrine in 1937.

democratic socialism was violently opposed. Rosselli seemed to excuse this past policy on the basis that the schism in 1921 naturally made the party wary of those on its immediate right and that nearly all the bourgeois parties of the center failed to vigorously oppose fascism in 1922. With an increased dependency on Moscow and the Third International, the PCd'I increasingly turned to attacking socialdemocracy, the Concentrazione Antifascista and Giustizia e Libertà in particular. If this policy could be defended in the 1920s (and even into the early 1930s after what seemed like the inevitable collapse of capitalism in 1929), it could not be defended after the rise of Hitler in Germany. The *svolta* or "turn" came in 1934, not because of some internal evolution within the PCd'I, but because it was dictated from Moscow. Accordingly, the entire vocabulary and rhetoric of the party changed: "dictatorship of the proletariat," discussion of the "Soviets," and "class warfare" passed out of fashion, to be replaced by an emphasis on "bread," "peace," "freedom," and "democratic rebirth." The party also re-discovered national traditions.¹⁹⁰ The central question though, was whether or not this new political line was correct? Rosselli responded that "the new communist policy is correct in its intentions, correct in its premises, but erroneous in its application."¹⁹¹ Its intention to pull antifascism out of "the closed hothouse in which it had been vegetating" was correct; its premise that it must re-establish contact with the masses and emerge from a sectarian isolation

¹⁹⁰Ibid., p. 487.

¹⁹¹Ibid., p. 489.

was correct. What was suspect in Rosselli's eyes was the party's ability to actually bring about revolution. To speak constantly about revolution without being able to create even the most elementary conditions to bring it about was sterile and actually counter-revolutionary. "The fear of staining the uncontaminated purity of one's faith must be overcome; often it is an alibi to do nothing, a lazy way to flee from the problems and responsibilities of a life of struggle."¹⁹² The political struggle cannot be reduced to merely a tactical or theoretical instrument; it is the essence of antifascism.

The problems of the PCd'I can be traced back to an excessive centralism, an almost military hierarchy that was both its great strength and weakness. Once a policy was decided, the party followed it to its extreme consequences with a tenacity that was truly admirable. The PCd'I probably could not alter its internal structure and character; but it could be a great service in bringing its organization, its discipline, its enthusiasm to a new, united, revolutionary proletarian party in which it would find the intellectual freedom and critical ferment that it lacked. Only in such activity, Rosselli wrote, would it be able to fulfill its mandate.¹⁹³

If Rosselli was cautious in his criticism of the PCd'I, he did not hesitate at all in pointing out the many deficiencies of the PSI in the fourth essay.¹⁹⁴ Although it had been the "propulsive and organizing center of the entire

¹⁹²Ibid.

¹⁹³Ibid. p. 490.

¹⁹⁴"Per l'unificazione politica del proletariato italiano, IV. I Partiti Socialisti," in *GL*, 23 April 1937; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 502-10.

proletarian struggle for thirty years" (1892-1921), it was now clear that the PCd'I claimed that title. After thirty years it had left an indelible stamp on Italian society, especially in the north and central parts of the country, where the masses had transformed themselves and the conditions of their labor, acquiring civil dignity and class consciousness.¹⁹⁵

Recounting the criticism made in his essay on the death of Turati, Rosselli pointed out that in its early years the PSI had attracted the youth of Italy with its intransigent idealism, but that the possibility of fruitful reformism degenerated into opportunism. While earlier its simple preaching had awoken the masses and persecution had stimulated the militants of the party, recently the party had been paralyzed between a revolutionary rhetoric and reformist actions. Its revitalization during the Libyan War of 1911-12 had been only temporary and based on a "verbal Blanquism, demagogic rather than seriously revolutionary."¹⁹⁶ In 1914 it confirmed itself as indecisive and inconsequential with its neutralism and policy of "neither support nor sabotage" for the approaching war. In 1918-19 it failed to accurately assess post-war conditions, tied as it was to pre-war politics. In January 1921 came the schism in Livorno with the communists; in October of the following year the split between maximalists and reformists. In truth, the Italian Socialist Party was defeated. Fascism had found it ridiculously easy to destroy

¹⁹⁵For the illustrative conception of socialists as "the autobiography of the nation," see Franco Livorsi, "I socialisti come autobiografia della nazione," in *Il Ponte* XLVIII, n. 5, May 1992, pp. 17-57.

¹⁹⁶"Per l'unificazione politica del proletariato italiano, IV. Partiti Socialisti," in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, p. 502.

what schism had left standing.

What was left of the PSI after nearly a decade and a half of fascism? Here, a distinction must be made between socialism as an ideal that informs antifascism and socialism as a political party "no longer able to insure the political unity of the proletariat."¹⁹⁷ Although there were still hundreds of thousands of people in Italy that considered themselves socialist, they were from the pre-fascist era; the few new recruits to the party were usually intellectuals rather than workers. Accordingly, their socialism was of a critical, humanistic Marxist variety and they were often not closely tied to the party.

The socialists in exile still continued in two separate parties, the PSLI--which adhered to the Second International and continued the reformist tradition--and the PSI--which held to its maximalist position. The latter had become petrified in its thinking and was merely a "cult of memory;" only the PSLI could be said to have remained an active, vital party, especially with the infusion of new members like Pietro Nenni (who left the PSI), Angelo Tasca (who had come from the PCd'I), Giuseppe Saragat and others.

The socialist party had been the instrument of political action and the vehicle for the political education of the working class in the pre-war era; but that era had been superseded by fascism, which completely changed the rules of the game, forcing a rethinking of old ideas and a new plan of action. Or, as Rosselli so accurately observed, "Every epoch and every struggle creates its own

¹⁹⁷Ibid., p. 504.

instruments of action."¹⁹⁸

The "instrument of action" for the present epoch--that of fascist totalitarianism--was, as Rosselli made explicit in the last essay, the movement founded in Paris in 1929, *Giustizia e Libertà*.¹⁹⁹ With death less than a month away, this essay can be read as Rosselli's political testament and the best expression of what he conceived *Giustizia e Libertà* to be.

To begin with, it was a *new* political movement without comparison in "the traditional political geography." The fact that it managed to survive proved that it possessed something that was lacking in the other political parties--a clear understanding of what fascism really was, what it meant to Italian and European society, and the means to combat and defeat it. As the only political movement to arise in the fascist era, Rosselli in effect thought of GL as the inverse image of fascism:

Giustizia e Libertà can be defined as the first integrally antifascist European movement, because it sees in fascism the central fact, the tremendous *innovation* [*novità*] of our time, and because its opposition derives not from a defense of positions acquired previously or from a simple extension of the schemes of the anti-capitalist struggle, but from a will to liberation that springs from the prison of that fascist world and the practical experience of struggle.²⁰⁰

This was the source of its open-minded and almost "experimental" character and action, its "intellectual restlessness." It was what lent the members of *Giustizia*

¹⁹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 509.

¹⁹⁹"Per l'unificazione politica del proletariato italiano V. *Giustizia e Libertà*," in *Giustizia e Libertà*, 14 May 1937; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 530-37.

²⁰⁰*Ibid.*, p. 530.

e Libertà the reputation of being *les enfants terribles* of the antifascist camp--a reputation that Rosselli seemed to court and relish. The members of Giustizia e Libertà did not come from any single party but from all over the political spectrum: socialists, communists, democrats and republicans; students of Gobetti, Gramsci and Salvemini; intellectuals without a party; the very young who came to political rebellion by their own paths in the solitude of tyranny; revolutionary workers formed during the struggle in the factories and the streets of Italy; old militants tired of waiting for the promised revolution. This disparate group was held together by the charisma of Rosselli and a powerful force:

A state of mind held them together rather than a common program: the revolt against the men, the mentality, the methods of the prefascist political world, responsible for the miserable end of the Aventine; an active will to struggle, that wished to be also the redemption for the humiliation of the battle not given and the defeat that was not deserved: a conviction that was not very precise in its terms, but very clear in its motives, of the necessity of a renewal *ab imis* of the social and moral life of the country.²⁰¹

The first three years of the movement (1929-1932) had been characterized by incessant activity such as the escape from Lipari, the flight over Milan, even plans for attempted assassination against Mussolini. Politically, it was a period of a united democratic-socialist-republican action. Within Italy, GL had attracted young, intelligent and committed antifascists to such an extent that it became a major force in the antifascist struggle. These younger antifascists were drawn to Giustizia e Libertà because of the conception of antifascism as the self-emancipation and the second *Risorgimento* of the Italians. The youth were also

²⁰¹Ibid., p. 531.

attracted because GL refused to make the political and moral compromises that had marked the prefascist parties. The movement was unique not only for conceiving antifascism as the second *Risorgimento*, for its intransigence, but also for its insistence that the totalitarian state--a creation of the twentieth century--required new methods to be defeated, capturing the fantasy and imagination of the masses and utilizing all the technological means at its disposal to agitate the energies of the people.²⁰²

By 1932, because of mass arrests, the first phase of *Giustizia e Libertà* had come to an end. A decade of fascism, glorified in a bombastic spectacle,²⁰³ had made substantial impact on Italian society. The youth of Italy now saw fascism not as a temporary parenthesis but as a point of reference that could not be ignored. For *Giustizia e Libertà* it was a delicate moment of transformation when it moved away from audacious acts and gestures to forge a coherent political program voiced through the *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà* (January 1932-January 1935). The new ideology claimed Piero Gobetti's *Rivoluzione liberale* and Antonio Gramsci's *Ordine Nuovo* as inspiration.²⁰⁴ Even though there was a multiplicity of voices and ideological positions, the principle themes of the *Quaderni* were liberation of the worker, agrarian reform, the role of the proletariat and the

²⁰²Ibid., p. 532.

²⁰³For an example of the fascist aesthetic, see the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of the "March on Rome," see *Mostra della rivoluzione fascista, 1922-1932*, Rome: Partito Nazionale Fascista, 1933.

²⁰⁴"Per l'unificazione politica del proletariato italiano, V. *Giustizia e Libertà*," p. 533.

structure of the State. The dissolution of the Concentrazione Antifascista in May 1934 led to the birth of *Giustizia e Libertà* as a weekly newspaper which fostered ties between antifascist intellectuals and workers throughout Europe.

While the first phase of the movement had concentrated on action, this second phase risked falling into a sterile intellectualism. Events in Europe such as the uprising in Vienna, the insurrection in Asturia and the attempted *coup d'état* in France in 1934, forced the members of *Giustizia e Libertà* to re-examine the possibility of concerted political action. The spread of fascism in Europe required that Rosselli and the others expand their vision of the movement to include the self-emancipation of all the peoples living under tyranny and the creation of a new Europe. This self-emancipation could come about only through the proletariat since the bourgeoisie had amply demonstrated its complete incapacity as a ruling class.

Contemporary political categories did not apply to *Giustizia e Libertà*:

Using this terminology, we would have to define ourselves as socialists, communists and libertarians at the same time (revolutionary socialists-liberal communists)...In socialism we see the animating idea-force of the entire workers' movement, the substance of every real democracy, the religion of the century. In communism [we see] the first historic application of socialism, the myth (unfortunately much worn), but above all the most energetic revolutionary force. In libertarianism [we see] the element of utopia, the dream, the powerful (even if coarse and primitive) religion of the individual.²⁰⁵

Giustizia e Libertà was the synthesis of these powerful currents, something that could not be attributed to any of the other political parties. In creating that

²⁰⁵Ibid., p. 535.

synthesis, it was able to direct the battle against fascism on two levels: the first, and more elementary, was the reawakening of the people, the stirring of the masses, the creation of a vital consciousness among the working classes; the second, more theoretical, was the formation of a new ruling class, the elite of a social and humanist revolution in opposition to the barbarity of fascism.²⁰⁶

Until now, the proposals formulated for the defeat of fascism were inadequate: the Popular Front strategy could only fail since one of its conditions was a democratic political life and strong parties--neither of which existed in Italy; and the "Unity of Action Pacts" that had been signed by the socialists and communists were also destined to failure since they only increased the rigidity of ideological positions and hindered rather than fostered cooperation. What then, was the alternative?

The best way to defeat fascism, according to Rosselli, was the creation of a new, original movement, based on the proletariat, capable of conducting a "practical, political and cultural struggle against the totalitarian colossus." This new movement should not be considered in terms of the traditional political parties, but as a larger social force, the "anticipation of the future society, a social microcosm."²⁰⁷

What could *Giustizia e Libertà* bring to this project? It demanded a renewal of the proletarian struggle; it counted on its experience of action and

²⁰⁶Ibid., p. 536.

²⁰⁷Ibid., pp. 536-37.

initiative; it brought a lucid interpretation of fascism and an intimate relation with the culture and history of the country; it addressed some of the most important problems of modernity in Italy such as the formation of ruling classes, the development of the *Mezzogiorno*, federalism and the alliance among urban workers, peasants and intellectuals. Above all, it was concerned with liberty, not in the abstract, formal sense, but based on concrete action, as a positive, emancipating force.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸Ibid., p. 537.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRAGIC HERO

Thou Paradise of exiles, Italy!

Percy Bysshe Shelley
Julian and Maddalo (1819)

...the sad death in exile according to a law that appears almost inevitable
for the best sons of Italy...

Carlo Rosselli
"Filippo Turati e il socialismo italiano" (1932)

The Academy of Exile

The particular problems created by exile were often upper most in Rosselli's mind. He had insisted, from the earliest days of his active participation in the antifascist cause that the struggle was to be carried out in Italy, and not from abroad. Exile did not change his position; if anything, he continued to insist that the important work was to be done in Italy, among the youth, workers and middle class. Rosselli was highly conscious of the exile tradition of the *Risorgimento* and often related his life and thought to men like Mazzini, Cattaneo, and others in the nineteenth century. The *fuorusciti* saw themselves as the

inheritors of this exile tradition.

This tradition of exile, I believe, could be extended even further. Although they did not consciously evoke it, there was a legacy of the exiled intellectual in Italy that stretched back to Dante, through Machiavelli and into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The role of the public intellectual has always been of critical importance in Italy, and their proximity to political power has often led to their special influence and their critical position vis-à-vis established institutions. Besides Russia,¹ there is perhaps no other country that has such a tradition of exiling its most important thinkers. Perhaps Rosselli even unconsciously thought of himself in the tradition of the exiled Hebrews and the moral and social catalyst of the Biblical prophets when he wrote that "Greek rationalism and the messianism of Israel" were the foundations of his liberal socialism.²

In a perceptive essay, Edward Said has revealed the essential nature of the exile experience:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently

¹The classic study of Russian exiles is E.H. Carr's work on Herzen and the Russian intellectuals, *The Romantic Exiles*, see also Philip Pomper, ed. *The Russian Revolutionary Intelligentsia*, Northbrook, Ill.: Davidson, 1986; and Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, trans. Francis Haskell, introduction by Isaiah Berlin, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

²Carlo Rosselli, *Socialismo liberale*, p. 4.

undermined by the loss of something left behind forever.³

Because of unprecedented upheavals and conflicts, the twentieth century's sign has been exile. As Said reminds us, modern Western culture has been shaped to a large degree by exiles, émigrés, refugees; in the process, exile has been transformed into a powerful and enriching motif in art and literature. The literary critic George Steiner has developed the thesis of a genre of twentieth century writing as "extraterritorial," literature created by and for exiles: "It seems proper that those who create art in a civilization of quasi-barbarism, which has made so many homeless, should themselves be poets unhoused and wanderers across language."⁴

From Lipari, Rosselli once wrote to his mother:

...In truth I regret nothing. Neither studies nor career abandoned, nor the forced separation from all of you and my normal life. If there has been anyone who freely chose his own destiny, that would be me. I have never hesitated, I have never doubted...Pity he who resists his nature...I confess, notwithstanding everything, that I love this life as it unwinds under the mind's eye...⁵

Twentieth-century exile, according to Said, cannot be made to serve notions of humanism because it is neither aesthetically nor humanistically comprehensible.

...to think of the exile informing this literature as beneficially humanistic is to banalize its mutilations, the losses it inflicts on those who suffer them, the muteness with which it responds to any attempt to understand it as "good for us." Is it not true that the views of exile...obscure what is truly horrendous: that exile

³Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile," in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, eds. Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Cornel West. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990, pp. 357-66.

⁴George Steiner, quoted in Said, p. 357.

⁵Letter of 25 August 1928; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 413.

is irremediably secular and unbearably historical; that it is produced by human beings for other human beings; and that, like death but without death's ultimate mercy, it has torn millions of people from the nourishment of tradition, family and geography?⁶

Rosselli devoted much thought to the "exile question" and the problems that exile produced. He constantly sought to overcome and transform the exile experience into a catalyst for the antifascist struggle and a renewal of European culture. "My mind and my heart," he wrote soon after the flight from Lipari, "are in Italy. There lie our hopes, there is our field of action...[Lussu and I] do not consider ourselves *fuorusciti*, but *estromessi*, prisoners who have reconquered their freedom with the sacred duty of reconquering it one day for all..."⁷

Recalling a page from Macaulay's *History of England* dealing with Irish exiles, Rosselli quoted the English historian that exiles were "people of strong character and noble soul, but scarce intelligence." The exile continues to conceive of the country as it was when he left, trapped in time. This misconception leads to only one of what Rosselli called "the dangers of exile."⁸ By 1934, after more than a decade of fascist rule, most exiled antifascists could not understand that for the youth of Italy, fascism was the norm. Many in Italy had no experience of pre-fascist Italy and for some, Italy without fascism was almost inconceivable. As much as they detested this mental state, the exiles were forced to recognize its

⁶Said, "Reflections on Exile," pp. 357-58.

⁷Letter of 14 August 1929 to Amelia, Marion and Nello; now in *Epistolario familiare*, p. 458.

⁸Thomas B. Macaulay, *Storia d'Inghilterra*, Florence: Le Monnier, 1859, p. 480; quoted in Carlo Rosselli, "Pericoli dell'esilio," in *Giustizia e Libertà*, 16 November 1934; now in *Scritti dell'esilio II*, pp. 69-71.

truth if they wished to compete for the allegiance of the youth in Italy.

Other common mistakes were the consequence of exile: the habit of depicting fascism as always on the verge of collapse, for example. This was more wishful thinking than rational analysis. If Mussolini was able to weather the Aventine Secession and the Matteotti crisis, how much stronger was the regime after the abolition of all legal opposition and the free press and the creation of the Exceptional Decrees and the Special Tribunal. Fascism, according to Rosselli, had proved that it was capable of surviving and its overthrow did not seem imminent in the 1930s; the antifascists had to be prepared to work another decade or more, if necessary.

The errors of exile were indeed damning:

...exaggerating the importance of existing movements; using a menacing tone; exaggerating minor details and scandals instead of attacking the foundations and looking at the larger picture; basing criticism on sentimental motives or the violence of the past; assuming an air of aristocratic antifascism toward those still in Italy; defending the so-called prefascist democracy or the existing pseudo-democracies; denying that nothing of worth has been accomplished by the regime; denying Mussolini any qualities, or, with the opposite exaggeration, identifying fascism with Mussolini; not insisting enough on the positive element of antifascism.⁹

The antifascist resistance in exile was still symbiotically tied to the pre-fascist parties; this was their single greatest weakness for it prevented them from acknowledging that fascism represented something completely new in European politics and it prevented them from considering new, revolutionary and possibly "illegal" tactics. History confirmed that intellectuals in exile were instrumental,

⁹"Pericoli dell'esilio," in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, p. 70.

both from an ideological and practical point of view, in developing a revolution.

Ironically, upon publication of this essay in late 1934, Mussolini himself used it to "prove" the "fatal errors" of the antifascist emigration--Rosselli was forced to reply within a week.¹⁰ A few months later, Libero Battistelli, ("a man of value and a dear friend" in Rosselli's words) a republican and Mason who had fled to Brazil but had been active in the antifascist resistance and a member of GL, wrote that the situation in Italy, after more than a decade of fascism, made any type of intellectual life impossible.¹¹ Agreeing that the political and cultural life of most Italians had precipitously declined, Rosselli argued that there still existed a minority of young people (and some older intellectuals) who count for a lot more than the *fuorusciti*, who because of the intrigues of exile life were losing vigor and spontaneity. "In every Italian city, in every university, and even in various working centers, there exist groups of young people that, if for now manage to accomplish little in politics, nevertheless manage to read, study and debate with an open-mindedness and intelligence that are rarely found in exile." Rosselli made reference here to the large number of translations of foreign works carried out in Italy, and parenthetically remarked that "someone must read them." It was only after the war, in the late 1940s and 1950s, that Rosselli was proven

¹⁰Benito Mussolini, "Errori fatali," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 1 December 1934; reprinted in Mussolini, *Opera Omnia* XXVI, pp. 390-91. The fanatical ideologue Roberto Farinacci also publicized these criticisms in his article, "Fessi confessi," in *Regime fascista*, 2 December 1934. Rosselli's reply was "A sua Eccellenza," in *GL*, 7 December 1934.

¹¹Battistelli's letter, along with Rosselli's response, "Discussione sull'esilio," were published in *GL*, 1 February 1935.

right in his assessment of intellectual life among the youth of Italy. Then, writers, artists and film-makers commented that for all the claims of "totalitarianism," many were able to go their own way, experiment and prepare the ground for that explosively fertile cultural life after the war.¹²

In and of itself, exile "is not a force. It is a fact that leaves open every alternative. *Fuoruscitismo* counts only inasmuch as it is the expression, the combative and living part of a movement *in patria*."¹³ Battistelli, for all his supposed radicalness, was trapped by the past and still conceived the struggle in rigid, dualistic terms: democracy or dictatorship, capitalism or communism.

The debate concerning exile was a natural extension of the debate over the character of the *Risorgimento* and the role of intellectuals such as Mazzini, Cattaneo, Ferrari. It was absolutely vital that the antifascists address the issue of the *Risorgimento*, not simply for historiographical reasons, but to discern if and what part of that tradition could be reconnected to the present struggle. If not, by abandoning the field, fascism would acquire, by default, a monopoly on the past in general and the *Risorgimento* in particular.

Between the Italian State of 1860 and fascism there is a relation, if not of filiation, more or less of progressive degeneration that forces us, contrary to Croce, not to end Italian history in 1914, but to follow it without too many

¹²Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "The Formation of Fascist Culture: The Realist Movement in Italy, 1930-1943," Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1991. Ruggero Zangrandi, *Il lungo viaggio attraverso il fascismo: contributo alla storia di una generazione*, Turin: Einaudi, 1948.

¹³"Discussione sull'esilio," in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, p. 108.

obstacles, until the march on Rome and beyond.¹⁴

After the defeat of 1848, the character of the *Risorgimento* changed. It was captured by the moderates and the state of Piedmont while its more radical demands were attenuated and the movement came to conceive of national unification solely in terms of expelling the foreigners. The consequence, according to Rosselli, was that there were in reality two *risorgimenti*: the official, moderate, piedmontese and successful movement; and the popular movement, prepared between 1830 and 1848, with its crowning success of Garibaldi's Thousand cunningly defused by Cavour at Teano. The leaders of the popular *Risorgimento* like Mazzini, Carlo Cattaneo, Luigi Ferrari, Carlo Pisacane, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Ausonio Franchi and Giuseppe Montanelli¹⁵ had always insisted that the problem of unification was intimately tied to the problem of freedom and social change. This transformation had to be the work of the Italians themselves, not the overthrow of one political servitude for another. This was essentially Rosselli's argument for the antifascist cause as well.

The antifascists had to return to the *Risorgimento*; not the official movement as recounted in the schools and glorified through the work of

¹⁴Carlo Rosselli, "Discussione sul Risorgimento," in *GL*, 26 April 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 152-53. Rosselli's reference is to Croce's *Storia d'Italia dal 1871 al 1915*. The Neapolitan historian and philosopher had been criticized for ending his famed historical study of Italy before the advent of fascism. In defense, Croce replied that as an historian, he could not write the history of a regime he despised.

¹⁵For the ideas and careers of these Italian democrats, cfr. Clara Lovett, *The Democratic Movement in Italy, 1830-1876*, Cambridge, Mass; Harvard University Press, 1982.

conservative or moderate historians,¹⁶ but the forgotten movement and the defeated figures of Mazzini, Cattaneo, Pisacane and Garibaldi. Even in fascist Italy, the embers of this popular *Risorgimento* have not died out, as demonstrated by the enormous success of works on Garibaldi and unification.¹⁷ All of which led Rosselli to examine the role of nationalism in unification and state-building:

...a thesis that holds that nationalism is an artificial construction, an invention of the 19th century, or to be exact, of the French Revolution, seems to me singularly unreal. The sentiment of nationality, if not a given of human nature...is certainly a social product that from the 19th century to today is still alive, too much alive. To deny this because of the degeneration and deviations that it has led to means to substitute for the present social reality upon which we wish to act, a scheme that will remain, like all schemes, even the most perfect, without influence.¹⁸

Nationalism cannot be wished away. By disregarding its power and influence and insisting on an abstract internationalism, the democrats and socialists were reducing themselves to impotence and hypocrisy. Rather, the sense of nationality should be turned to a Mazzinian ideal: a European force, a necessary rite of passage, education, construction, dissolving it from the statist, mystical, nationalistic, imperialistic tradition. The political oppression of 19th century Austria had been replaced by a "domestic Austria" based on social oppression.¹⁹

¹⁶Rosselli specifically criticized the work of A. Omodeo, *L'età del Risorgimento italiano*. Messina: Principato, 1931, as being an example of this type of "official" historiography. "Discussione sul Risorgimento," in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, p. 155.

¹⁷G. Sacerdote, *La vita di Giuseppe Garibaldi secondo i risultati delle più recenti indagini storiche*, Milan: Rizzoli, 1931. C. Spellanzon, *Storia del Risorgimento e dell'Unità italiana*, Milan: Rizzoli, 1933-34. "Discussione sul Risorgimento," p. 155, note 2.

¹⁸"Discussione sul Risorgimento," pp. 158-59.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

Proof that nationalism was a potent force and had eclipsed international solidarity abounded in the 1930s. For Rosselli, the event that crystallized this reality in his mind were the elections that took place on 13 January 1935 in the Saar region, where the populace was given the opportunity to join France or Germany. The election results were a catastrophe for the united front and the socialists who were expecting at least 30-40% of the vote, and a thunderous victory for the forces of German nationalism. By a nearly 10-1 margin, the people of the Saar voted to join a Nazi Germany.²⁰ This in effect was a vote in support of the Hitler revolution two years after it assumed power and Rosselli drew the most drastic conclusion that traditional socialism, communism, the old ideologies, the pre-fascist parties were all "liquidated;" it was proof of the "cadaveric impotence" of the older, traditional forces.²¹ In addition, it led to the clearest attack on the passivity and malleability of the masses. The election results confirmed two ideas that Rosselli had insisted upon in the face of criticism from orthodox socialists and Marxists: the tremendous force of nationalism, especially in those countries that have only recently been united, like Italy and Germany, where it functions as a Sorelian myth for reactionary ideology; and the absurdity of conducting the battle against fascism allied solely with the masses.

As for the masses, it is time to say that the masses, as such, are brutal,

²⁰The results: 447,000 voted for reunion with Germany; 46,000 were opposed.

²¹"La lezione della Sarre," *GL*, 18 January 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, p. 95-97.

ignorant, impotent, feminine²², prey to he who makes the most noise, who has the most money, he who has success. Fascism is the most perfect mass regime in history, where man disappears to become a fraction of a procession, a chorus of hosannas, a plebiscite, an army.²³

To fight fascism by relying only on the masses was a losing proposition. Instead, fascist regimes could be defeated by returning to the people a sense of autonomy, reason and the value of freedom. This would take place first among a minority of intellectuals and workers, and only then, perhaps, spread to the masses. "We are not democrats, in the too-mechanical sense that the word has assumed; we do not attribute too much importance to majorities and minorities if the majorities conduct themselves like sheep."²⁴

Several months earlier Rosselli had addressed the relationship between GL and the masses, since the movement had often been criticized for ignoring the problem and accused of "individualism," "romantic voluntarism" and the "cult of heroism."²⁵ In fascist Italy where the regime had, through outright terror, legislation and more subtle forms such as parades, sporting events and the control of leisure, effective control of the masses, a policy of combatting fascism on that level makes no sense. The masses were inert and lacking political consciousness. Because of this situation in Italy:

²²Rosselli was criticized for using the adjective in this way, and apologized in a post-script in the lead editorial a week later (25 January 1935).

²³"La lezione della Sarre," in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 96-7.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 97.

²⁵"Giustizia e Libertà e le masses," in *GL*, 20 July 1934; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 25-28.

we sustain that the only fundamental action that can be carried out is an action of restricted nuclei, of active and combative minorities that take up the essential task of educating the cadres for the revolutionary struggle, to attack the enemy at its weakest points, and above all to remain ready to use with the utmost rapidity and decisiveness the favorable circumstances that sooner or later will necessarily present themselves.²⁶

As could be expected, Rosselli and the movement were criticized for being elitist, a "party of intellectuals" that denigrated the masses. "La lezione della Sarre" generated such a response that Rosselli devoted two more articles on the related topics of class and socialization.²⁷ Again, he repeated that antifascism could not limit itself to fighting fascism only on the basis of class warfare. The simple, manichean idea that the bourgeoisie was fascist and the proletariat antifascist actually hindered the struggle against the regime. Now, with Italian fascism in power for over a decade and Hitler in Germany, the traditional "class" parties were forced to reconsider their positions. Previously, liberty, rights and the law were considered "bourgeois"; now buffeted by "the fascist hurricane, they quickly and furiously re-evaluate the old idols, they exalt them and recognize that the struggle for rights, freedom, justice against the fascist 'barbarities' cannot be conducted on a strictly class terrain."²⁸ Rosselli was not denying the fact of class conflict, but only insisting that fascism was a phenomenon that went beyond mere class divisions to engulf all of civilization.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 26-7.

²⁷"Classismo e antifascismo," *GL*, 25 January 1935; and "Socialismo e socializzazione," *ibid.*, 8 February 1935. Both articles are reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 98-102 and pp. 110-114.

²⁸"Classismo e antifascismo," in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, p. 99.

Fascism is the visible expression of the decadence and corruption of the world in which we live, in all its diverse aspects, in morale, culture, freedom, as in the economy and political life. It concerns all the people, *including a good part of the proletariat*. It is truly totalitarian.²⁹

While the proletariat in Italy may have maintained some distance from the fascist regime, in Germany it seemed that large segments of the proletariat supported National Socialism with its dynamism, anti-semitism, rabid nationalism and mass rallies. The truth is that in all countries there was only a small minority of workers and intellectuals who were opposed to fascism.

Rosselli, influenced by his mother, nationalist currents in Florence and the history of Italian Jews who saw their emancipation tied to the unification of a modern state, had always insisted on the power of nationalism; but a cosmopolitan, enlightened, humane nationalism in the tradition of a Herder or a Mazzini. The phenomenon of exile only fortified those ideas. As Said perceptively pointed out,

the interplay between nationalism and exile is like Hegel's dialectic of servant and master, opposites informing and constituting each other. All nationalisms in their early stages develop from a condition of estrangement...Triumphant, achieved nationalism then justifies, retrospectively as well as prospectively, a history selectively strung together in narrative form...Exiles feel...an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people. The crucial thing is that a state of exile free from this triumphant ideology--designed to reassemble an exile's broken history into a new whole--is virtually unbearable, and virtually impossible in today's world...³⁰

Rosselli's thinking and writing about exile and nationalism inevitably led

²⁹Ibid., p. 100. Emphasis in the original.

³⁰Said, "Reflections on Exile," pp. 359-60.

to an examination of the role and function of the State in the modern age. In the twentieth century, and perhaps in all centuries, Rosselli believed, the State is "essentially an oppressive machine."³¹ In a more biting critique, worthy of the best writings of the anarchists, he opened an essay (which, consciously or not echoed Marx and Engel's *Manifesto*) "There is a monster in the modern world--the State--that is devouring society."³² The modern dictatorial State has overthrown all human relations and substituted forced associations in the place of spontaneous, organic, creative ties. It is the logical conclusion of a process of statalism in which there is no longer any place for human beings. *Homo sapiens* (thinking man) has been replaced by *homo servans* (servile man) serving the dictates of production, bureaucracy, race or empire. Completely subjecting human beings, the State compounds their degradation by demanding to be worshipped, by forcing its subjects to rejoice in their slavery. "The alternative by now is clear: either the State will crush us, Society; or we defeat the modern State, liberating Society."³³

In a direct criticism of Hegel, and even more so his servile followers, Rosselli pointed out that the State has been transformed in the last century from being a part of society into an absolute, a universal, the divine idea manifest on earth, and that the only spiritual reality, the only true freedom could be achieved

³¹"Della pace e della guerra," *GL*, 12 April 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, p. 137.

³²"Contro lo Stato," in *GL*, 21 September 1934; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 42-45.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 43.

through the State, and the "total submission to its exalted ends...In the beginning *the* State did not exist; only states existed."

In contrast to the modern, despotic, centralizing State, there is the alternative of a social federalism. The prototype of the "anti-state" society were the medieval communes of the 13th-15th centuries, with their free unions, representatives of the cities, the corporations, universities, confraternities and societies. Even when the first lines of the absolutist state became obvious in the early modern period, there were associations and groups outside the sphere of the State, such as the Church or the aristocracy. The modern nation state was born with industrial capitalism and jacobin democracy.³⁴ Both industrial capitalism and jacobin democracy began as liberating factors; both degenerated into conservative and formal structures. In the space of little more than a century, because of modern war and economic crisis, citizens have been transformed from voters into subjects. As modern war gave the State unlimited control over the blood of its subjects, the economic crisis gave it unprecedented control over society. "Masters of bread and blood, the State, in fascist countries, now commands the minds and consciousness of its subjects...The alienation of man in favor of the monster is thus complete. We are in full barbarism."³⁵

Explicitly relating his position to the tradition of Proudhon and Bakunin, Rosselli called for a strategy of a permanent, adversarial and confrontational

³⁴Ibid., p. 44.

³⁵Ibid.

stance versus the State. His revolutionary, liberal socialism should not be confused with the idea that equates socialism and statism as it has developed in Stalin's Russia. Rosselli quoted the Marx of the Gotha Program, ("Freedom consists in transforming the State, the supreme organ of the society, into an organ that is entirely subordinate to society") and the Marx of *The Civil War in France* (the State is "the parasite that nourishes itself on the substance of society and paralyzes free will"). For Rosselli, Marx was not a worshipper of the State, but his followers were.

The only possible conclusion from this analysis was that the Italian revolution, built upon the ruins of fascist capitalism, could not be anything but a federative association with the widest possible autonomy and freedom. While there would still be a need for a central administration (and this is the only note in the entire essay that the anarchists would have disagreed with), it would be at the service of society. Or, as Rosselli so succinctly ended the essay, "Man is the end. Not the State."³⁶

On 15 May 1935, the Turinese group of Giustizia e Libertà was decimated by mass arrests. A month before, to quell domestic criticism in preparation for the Ethiopian War, Mussolini had instructed the police to prepare a round-up of dissidents.³⁷ The members in Turin were betrayed by a

³⁶Ibid., p. 45.

³⁷Garosci, *Vita II*, p. 136.

pornographer and police spy, Pitigrilli.³⁸ Among the more than two hundred persons arrested were Michele Giua, professor at the Military Academy of Turin (sentenced to 15 years); Vittorio Foa³⁹, lawyer (15 years); Massimo Mila, writer and music critic (8 years); Augusto Monti, teacher of a generation of young writers, including Cesare Pavese (5 years); Carlo Levi was sentenced to *confino* in the Basilicata region; out of that experience came his most famous work, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*.

Upon hearing the news in Paris, Carlo Rosselli immediately recognized the significance of the arrests. The Turin branch of GL was the largest, most active and most creative of the cells in Italy. For Rosselli, who had always insisted that the real antifascist struggle had to take place in Italy, the destruction of the Turin organization was a tremendous blow.

The arrests could not have come at a worse time. Emilio Lussu had withdrawn temporarily from active work because of illness; soon he resigned from the Central Committee of GL in a dispute with Rosselli. He eventually moved to Switzerland and only returned to an active antifascism in 1937.⁴⁰ Nenni and Tasca were continuing their criticisms of Rosselli. A new group of extreme republicans, the A.R.S. (Azione Repubblicana Socialista) presented itself

³⁸On the grotesquely fascinating character of Pitigrilli, see *Letter di una spia: Pitigrilli e l'OVRA*, ed. Domenico Zucàro, Milan: SugarCo, 1977.

³⁹On Vittorio Foa and the Foa family, see Alexander Stille, *Benevolence and Betrayal: Five Jewish Families Under Fascism*, pp. 91-165.

⁴⁰On the conflict with Rosselli, see Manlio Brigaglia, *Emilio Lussu e Giustizia e Libertà*, Cagliari: Edizioni Della Torre, 1976, pp. 111-37.

as a rival to Rosselli's movement. *Giustizia e Libertà* was preparing a concerted campaign against the Ethiopian War, but had become isolated from the other antifascist parties because of its polemic with the *Concentrazione Antifascista*, Rosselli's criticism of the socialists and communists, and his interest in the French neo-socialists.

The Ethiopian War marked a turning point in Rosselli's analysis of Italian fascism.⁴¹ While he had written in 1933 that fascism and National Socialism inevitably led to war, he had perhaps underestimated Mussolini's regime, believing that it would not risk a confrontation with England or France over Ethiopia. When in February and March of 1935 preparations were being made for an armed expedition to Ethiopia, Rosselli was forced to recognize that Mussolini's regime would be going to war, regardless of what France, England or the League of Nations might say. War with Ethiopia would represent a radical break with the past.

Rosselli's first article⁴² dealing with the Ethiopian War respectfully pointed out that the Ethiopians were the only independent people in Africa. A war would be long and bloody; revenge for the Italian defeat at Adowa in 1896 could be achieved in a few months against a people without modern military technology, but "it will take years, decades, to subdue, or rather exterminate, a

⁴¹"Magrini" (Aldo Garosci), "Rosselli e la guerra d'Etiopia," in *Quaderni Italiani* II, New York, August 1942, pp. 32-58.

⁴²The manuscripts of the essays are conserved in the BNF, FR, cassetta 1, inserto II, nn. 25, 26, 29, 30.

free people of 10 million."⁴³ Not without reason, Rosselli saw the Italian war in Africa as an opportunity for Nazi Germany to "colonize" Austria, seen as part of the Italian "sphere of influence" since the end of the first world war. As the Italian-Turkish War of 1911-12 forecast the European conflagration of 1914-1918, the Italian-Ethiopian War would signal a new European war.

A month later, Rosselli listed the reasons why *Giustizia e Libertà* was against the Ethiopian "adventure:"

We are against the African war:

- a) because it is a fascist war;
- b) because it is a capitalist-statist war;
- c) because it is a colonial war;
- d) because it is a war.

We are not old-fashioned pacifists. We do not love blood, but neither are we followers of Gandhi.⁴⁴

Rosselli was mistaken in believing that the regime's decision to go to war in Africa could only lead to civil war in Italy. Between April and May 1935, he devoted three articles to the propaganda campaign against the war.⁴⁵ A realistic analysis of the forthcoming war would reveal that the fascists had every possibility of victory. Fascist propaganda was promising all things to all people: unemployed workers and land-hungry peasants were presented a picture of a

⁴³"Nuovo crimine?," in *GL*, 15 February 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 120-22.

⁴⁴"Perché siamo contro la guerra d'Africa," in *GL*, 8 March 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 123-27.

⁴⁵"Come condurre la propaganda contro la guerra d'Africa," in *Giustizia e Libertà*; I. "Essere realisti," 12 April 1935; II. "Argomenti senza presa," 26 April 1935; III. "Il perché di una guerra," 3 May 1935; all are reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 140-51 and 158-64.

wealthy colony to be exploited; the middle class was promised easy positions in a colonial bureaucracy; to the adventurous youth, a new challenge and an evasion of the boredom of normal life, with the possibility of glory. "In short, Abyssinia will function as a diversion on a grand scale."

How were the antifascists to combat this line of propaganda? What exactly did it mean to be "realists"? Rosselli insisted that "*the African war is absolutely unpopular*."⁴⁶ Here, Rosselli may have been himself a victim of exile; although hotly contested, many have seen the Ethiopian War as highly successful for Mussolini's regime.⁴⁷

Rosselli was closer to the truth in seeing the Ethiopian War as an example of the "new imperialism." The older empires had been built on a conception of economics and politics that was by now superseded by events like the Industrial Revolution and modern warfare. Germany had developed into a world power in the thirty years after its unification with no colonies or empire to speak of. "Yankee capitalism," wrote Rosselli, colonizes the world without "taking" countries; as in the Philippines, it "liberates" countries, the better to subject them to American markets. The new economic crisis could not be solved by acquiring colonies, but had to be solved at home, "revolutionizing a social system which makes modern technology a force for impoverishment and by renouncing idiotic

⁴⁶"Come condurre la propaganda contro la guerra d'Africa I. Essere realisti," in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, p. 143.

⁴⁷On the Ethiopian War, see Thomas M. Coffey, *Lion By the Tail: The Story of the Italian-Ethiopian War*, New York: Viking, 1974; Angelo Del Boca, *The Ethiopian War*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

dreams of autarky...in the event of victory and after twenty years, we can allocate *one million lire and a dead soldier for every living colonist*."⁴⁸

Ordinary logic dictates that colonial wars are fought for territorial expansion. But Mussolini and fascism, for Rosselli, were not logical. What then, were the reasons for this war? In the third essay of the series, Rosselli attempted a psychological profile of Mussolini in order to discern the reasons. Mussolini was 53 in 1935, "on the threshold of old-age...what will he leave behind?"

A social revolution, certainly not. Italian society remains unchanged in its social fundamentals. Mussolini is intelligent enough to recognize that the corporations are bureaucratic entities with no life. A decree created them: a decree can dissolve them. Perhaps the *Opera Dopolavoro*⁴⁹ and the child insurance might be saved: but both are copied from bolshevik Russia.

A political revolution? Yes, as long as Mussolini is around. But the monarchy and the Papacy remain...⁵⁰

The dictatorship might claim roads, buildings, land reclamation schemes, but nothing that could not have been accomplished, and better, by another political regime. In foreign policy, the picture is not much brighter: no expansion of frontiers, no conquest of Dalmatian, no wars won. Mussolini's only claim would be to have "saved Italy from bolshevism," inaugurating a series of mass, reactionary regimes in Europe--an ironic boast for a former revolutionary

⁴⁸"Come condurre la propaganda contro la guerra d'Africa, II. Argomenti senza presa," in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 149-51.

⁴⁹The *Opera Dopolavoro* was the successful attempt on the part of the regime to control the leisure activities of the people. Citizens of all ages and both sexes were encouraged to join cinema clubs, hiking excursions, beach trips, etc. See Victoria De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization and Leisure in Fascist Italy*.

⁵⁰"Come condurre la propaganda contro la guerra d'Africa, III. "Il perché di una guerra," in *Scritti dell'esilio*, pp. 158-59.

socialist.⁵¹ A restlessness had been creeping into Italian society and a great, diversionary spectacle was necessary for the people. The myth of Imperial Rome was brought out again for public consumption and generals began to emulate the ancient Roman general Scipione.⁵² The Abyssinian campaign was not just a capitalist war, brought about by the Italian bourgeoisie in their incessant search for profits; more importantly and more to the point, it was a war that revealed the desperation of the fascist regime.

The antifascist opposition to the war had been, according to Rosselli, extremely weak for several reasons. For one thing, the old mentality of the pre-fascist past was still alive in parties, programs and individuals. Secondly, and more importantly, because of the mechanics of totalitarianism which denies any competition, the systematic use of terror, and its own lack of motives, the antifascist opposition has been reduced for years to a position of negation--a permanent *no*, which can be proof of character, but was not sufficient to generate enthusiasm and sympathy.

It is necessary that antifascism passes from *no* to *yes*, affirming itself no longer, or not just, as *anti*-fascism, but as a positive, renovating force of Italian society.⁵³

In what sounded like a mini-manifesto, Rosselli summed up the reasons against

⁵¹Ibid., p. 159.

⁵²Paolo Orano, publicist and apologist for the regime wrote a sycophantic biography of General Graziano, military leader of the Ethiopian campaign, *Rodolfo Graziano, generale scipione*. Rome: Pinciana, 1936.

⁵³"Il perché di una guerra," p. 161.

the war:

GL is not against the war because we are antifascist or because we are lachrymose pacifists. GL is against the war in Africa because we consider it extremely foolish that Italian youths let themselves be deported to Africa to bring, by force of bombs, "civilization" to Abyssinia, when they are convinced that the present civilization is false and corrupt and cannot renovate itself without revolution and internal war: war against the dictatorship to return dignity to man; war against capitalism and the bourgeois mentality to destroy parasitism and privileges and renovate the ruling class; war against the Papacy to eliminate the great center of corruption of our history; war against the monarchy, rhetoric, venal patriotism, corporative red-tape, reactionary and reformist socialists; war against universal barbarization, old diplomacies, the old States, the old Europe that arises--in the name of a socialist and liberating humanism.⁵⁴

Although Rosselli in truth did not offer much in the way of tactics to oppose the war beyond a renewed propaganda campaign, his analysis of the war rings true in the light of hindsight. In July (well before military operations actually began in October), he wrote that the war was unlike any other colonial venture; in its logistical and economic demands, it had to be compared with a war on the European continent. Victory would be worse than defeat because it would confirm Mussolini and the fascists in their belief in the imperial myth and the war itself would signify the path to ruin, both politically and economically.⁵⁵ As to the fascist argument that Abyssinia will relieve overpopulation and land scarcity in the *Mezzogiorno* (an argument especially attractive to Italian immigrants in other countries), Rosselli asked how would it be possible for Italy to find the necessary capital to develop Abyssinia when the

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 162.

⁵⁵"La guerra d'Africa sarà la rovina economic d'Italia. Previsioni sul costo e finanziamento della guerra," in *GL*, 19 July 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 180-85.

capital could not be found to develop the *Mezzogiorno*? Emigration cannot be easily directed, just as population cannot be easily manipulated. This was a "great illusion."⁵⁶ Although Rosselli was too optimistic in believing that "Abyssinia will be for Mussolini's Italy what Spain was for Napoleon's France,"⁵⁷ he correctly foresaw that France and England would not risk a major conflict with Italy over Abyssinia while Hitler reigned in Germany,⁵⁸ and that Mussolini was engaging in a foreign war for reasons of domestic politics.⁵⁹

In the context of an impending war in Africa, Rosselli proposed an alliance with the communists for the purpose of consecrating all available forces against the regime. Not surprisingly, the communists refused to join any alliance in which it had to share power or modify its principles.⁶⁰ A trip to England confirmed Rosselli's suspicions that the British were unwilling to risk a confrontation with Mussolini. Conditions had changed in England; perhaps nothing symbolized this as much as the fact that Poliakov, editor of the *Times*, the newspaper that had done so much to secure Marion's release from prison

⁵⁶"La grande illusione. L'Abissinia colonia di popolamento," in *GL*, 26 July 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 186-91.

⁵⁷"Come si presenta la guerra d'Africa," in *GL*, 2 August 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 192-95.

⁵⁸"Specchi per allodole pacifiste," in *GL*, 23 August 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 196-200.

⁵⁹"Mussolini e i giovani," in *GL*, 30 August 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 201-205.

⁶⁰Garosci, *Vita* II, pp. 132-35.

after Carlo's escape from Lipari, was an agent in the pay of Mussolini's fascists.⁶¹

In October 1935, communists, socialists, republicans, democrats, anarchists and members of the LIDU met in Brussels for a Congress of Italians Abroad to deal with the Ethiopian war and debate the question of sanctions. The Congress concluded its work by sending a telegram to the president of the League of Nations, Eduard Benes, demanding that a firm policy of sanctions be applied against fascist Italy. Rosselli had declined to attend the congress, believing that it would be more words than action and not achieve anything concrete. Instead, *Giustizia e Libertà* held its own congress a month earlier in Paris.⁶² The result was a "Manifesto agli Italiani" written by Rosselli and Umberto Calosso.⁶³

When in early 1936 it became obvious that Mussolini was close to victory in Ethiopia, Rosselli was honest enough to recognize his error in thinking that the African campaign would take years⁶⁴ and the symbolic closing of one era and the opening of another, more dangerous period. Yet victory in Africa, in the long run, would be a "ball of lead" for the regime. In possession of an "empire,"

⁶¹Ibid. p. 135.

⁶²The congress, held in Paris on 11-12 September, was described by Rosselli in "Che cosa è stata il convegno di Giustizia e Libertà," in *GL*, 20 September 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 217-21. See also Garosci, *Vita* II, pp. 140-44.

⁶³Published in *Giustizia e Libertà*, 20 September 1935.

⁶⁴"Fascism is winning in Abyssinia. The previsions of those, us included, who judged that a military campaign of several years would be necessary, are revealed as mistaken." "Realismo," in *GL*, 10 April 1936; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, p. 339.

Italy would have to devote scarce and precious resources to "pacify" the Ethiopians. One day it would become clear what folly it was to launch Italy on a path of imperial competition with England or France when it lacked the economic and industrial potential. For Rosselli, the Abyssinian war was to foreign policy what Mussolini's speech of 3 January 1925 was to domestic policy--a conscious move to overcome a crisis of regime.⁶⁵ After Mussolini declared the "Empire" from the balcony of Palazzo Venezia in Rome on 9 May 1936, Rosselli wrote that "It is better to recognize with a virile frankness that fascism, at least domestically, emerges reinforced, consolidated by this crisis."⁶⁶ *Giustizia e Libertà* responded to the proclamation of the Empire in its 15 May 1936 edition with a six-column headline "Contro l'impero, per la nazione." By the afternoon of Friday 15 May, Rosselli's lead editorial of that issue, "Realismo ancora" had been telephoned to Rome. Mussolini seized upon Rosselli's article to declare the self-admitted defeat of the antifascist *fuorusciti*. Mussolini's article appeared the next morning in the regime's official organ, *Il Popolo d'Italia*.⁶⁷ Besides being attacked from the right, Rosselli was criticized from the Left: Luigi Longo had penned another biting reply on 9 May, "false in

⁶⁵"La palla di piombo," in *GL*, 16 April 1936; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 342-44.

⁶⁶Quoted in Garosci, *Vita* II, p. 146.

⁶⁷"Ironia della storia," in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 16 May 1936.

its spirit, false in its citations," according to Rosselli's reply.⁶⁸

Spain

The prophets are no longer disarmed. And the descendants of the prophets, with rifle in hand, have acquired a new consciousness.⁶⁹

As Rosselli foresaw, victory in Ethiopia would push fascism, with a renewed yet false sense of confidence, into new adventures. Even before victory was proclaimed in Africa, the regime was setting its sights on other parts of Europe. In Spain on 16 February 1936, the republicans were elected after the so-called *bienio negro* or two black years of conservative rule. In 1934, the republic had been threatened, but had been saved by an uprising of peasants and workers in the Asturias. Meanwhile, a coalition of French socialists and radicals were victorious in the spring elections of 1936, in what seemed like an effective response to the attempted *coup d'état* of February 1934.

Although it might have appeared that the forces of the Left were finally responding to the fascist threat in Europe, Rosselli saw continued signs of weakness. He criticized the Italian version of the Popular Front as defensive and insufficient in answering fascism by recreating the old party coalitions of the

⁶⁸"Gallo" (Luigi Longo), "Furori eroici ed azione concreta," in *Grido del Popolo*, 9 May 1936; Rosselli's reply was "Prospettiva sull'unità di azione," in *GL*, 15 May 1936; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 351-53.

⁶⁹Carlo Rosselli, "Per l'unità dell'antifascismo italiano," in *GL*, 22 January 1937; reprinted in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, pp. 102-6 and *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 445-49.

past. In the very month (June 1936) that the Popular Front published a ringing manifesto⁷⁰ calling for the governments of Europe to resist fascism in Europe, the conservative English government announced in the House of Commons that the effort to impose sanctions against Italy for the Ethiopian War would be abandoned. For Rosselli, it was a fundamental mistake to appeal to the League of Nations or the national governments when they had so clearly and obviously "betrayed their mission." The Popular Front was making the fatal error of repeating the strategy of the Aventine Secession: "the old Aventine appealed to the king. The new Aventine appeals to the League and the governments."⁷¹ The call for an uprising in Italy was premature, and totalitarian Italy was not democratic France. The fascist victory in Ethiopia forced the antifascists to re-think their basic ideas, re-group and re-organize.

On 4 July 1936 the League of Nations officially ended the sanctions against Italy. Rosselli's response was summed up in one word: nausea.⁷² Stephen Lux, a Viennese Jew, Czech citizen and journalist for *Prague Presse* committed suicide during the 4 July session to call attention to the plight of the Jews in Hitler's Germany. For Rosselli, the suicide of Lux was an individual and symbolic symbol of the collective suicide of democratic Europe. Mussolini and

⁷⁰The complete text was published in *Journal des Nations* on 12 June 1936 and *Il Nuovo Avanti* on 13 June 1936.

⁷¹"Fronte popolare e Stato totalitario," in *GL*, 26 June 1936; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 380-84. Garosci defends the Popular Front against Rosselli's criticisms in *Vita* II, p. 155.

⁷²"L'Europa si fascistizza....," in *GL*, 10 July 1936; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 385-87.

Hitler had reduced the League of Nations to insignificance and could now proceed with their plan for the fascistization of Europe. Their only conclusion would be that an England that did not go to war over the Mediterranean would not go to war for central or eastern Europe (here, Rosselli was mistaken); and that a France which did not go to war over the Ruhr valley would not go to war over Austria or Czechoslovakia (here, he was correct).

Several days after the attempted *coup d'état* of 18 July 1936 in Spain, various members of *Giustizia e Libertà* met in the offices of the journal on Rue Val-de-Grâce.⁷³ Rosselli proposed a quick and decisive intervention of a united antifascism in Spain; here was the opportunity to transform antifascism from a negative, passive idea into a positive, active force.

In view of the fact that fascism won by force and rules by force, in view of the fact that the most basic freedoms have been snuffed out; in view of the fact that in certain hours a deed is worth more than a thousand speeches, we Italian exiles, volunteers of freedom, will begin to combat fascism with force in Spain.⁷⁴

Unfortunately, the reform socialists were hesitant and the communists were awaiting word from Moscow on how to proceed. Only the maximalist socialists and the anarchists agreed with Rosselli's demand for a volunteer force to leave immediately for Spain.⁷⁵ For the next ten months until his assassination,

⁷³Garosci, *Vita II*, p. 163.

⁷⁴Quoted by Aldo Garosci, "Spagna: il Battaglione Garibaldi," in *Il Mondo*, 3 July 1956.

⁷⁵For the history of Italian volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, see Sandro Attanasio, *Gli italiani e la guerra di Spagna*, Milan: Mursia, 1974; Aldo Garosci, *Gli intellettuali e la guerra di Spagna*, Turin: Einaudi, 1959; for Rosselli's role, see Garosci's "Rosselli in Spagna," signed

Rosselli fought a battle on two fronts: against Franco and his followers and in trying to convince the supporters of the Spanish Republic that this was not just a civil war to defend the republic, but the first scene of the last act of the drama of European fascism. Rosselli conceived of the Spanish Civil War as the first real opportunity to combat fascism on equal terms, on the field of battle, with the only element understood by fascism--force. In a letter from the front after his first battle, he recalled Ernesto Rossi's motto that "Ideas are worthless if one is not ready to serve them with action."⁷⁶ The Marxists and anarchists instead saw the war as the opportunity to create a Marxist or anarchist society. This differing vision of the Spanish Civil War was to cripple the effort to defend the Republic and caused Rosselli much grief in his relations with the communists and anarchists.

Spain had occupied Rosselli only sporadically in the 1930s. He had visited the country twice in the spring of 1931 in an attempt to organize another propaganda flight over Italy.⁷⁷ The first issue of the *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà* had published the complete text of the Constitution of the Spanish

with his *nome de guerre* "Magrini", in *Quaderni Italiani* IV New York, April 1943, pp. 15-112. In English, see Massimo Mangili-Climpson, *Men of Heart of Red, White and Green: Italian Antifascists in the Spanish Civil War*, New York: Vantage Press, 1985; Margaret Jane Slaughter, "Italian Antifascism: The Italian Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War," Ph.D. dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1972.

⁷⁶31 August 1936 to Marion Rosselli; now in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, p. 48.

⁷⁷The fascist police were well aware of Rosselli's trip to Spain, as proved by their report of 26 June 1931. The one-sentence document stated: "It has been reported from Barcelona that the noted *fuoruscito* Carlo Rosselli arrived there yesterday." ACS, Busta 4221, fascicolo 2.

Republic.⁷⁸ It was not until three years later that he returned to the subject.⁷⁹

After the uprisings in Vienna and Spain, Rosselli concluded that fascism could not come to power except through civil war. Also, the power and the importance of Spanish anarchism had to be recognized, even if it contained certain inherent problems. The real fatal error of the Spanish revolution of 1932 was the failure to implement land reform. Without casting doubt on the good faith and high moral standard of the revolutionary leader Manuel Azaña, Rosselli questioned the conception of the revolution:

...[Azaña] would have wanted in Spain an exemplary revolution, as they have never existed in history: a patient people that waits for the work of the wise legislators, a Republic that was both Platonic and quixotic, an enlightened government composed of intellectuals and educators. These utopias come at a price. It is not enough to view the revolution from above. It is necessary to view it from below...⁸⁰

The position of both the Marxists in POUM (Partito Obrero de Unificación Marxista) and the anarcho-syndicalists in rejecting the "bourgeois republic" was another mistake in Spain. Yet for all his criticism of the leading players and forces in Spain, Rosselli sought out both Spanish Marxists and anarchists.⁸¹

One week after the attempted *coup*, Rosselli's first editorial on the Spanish crisis appeared in *Giustizia e Libertà*. The traditional reactionary forces--

⁷⁸*QGL*, n. 1, January 1932, pp. 58-78.

⁷⁹"Aspetti della crisi spagnola," in *QGL* n. 12, January 1935, pp. 105-119.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁸¹In a very important way, Rosselli's relations with the Italian and Spanish anarchists were prepared by the historical scholarship and reputation of Nello, famed for his work *Mazzini e Bakunin* which offered a sympathetic portrait of the Russian anarchist and his activities in Italy.

Church, Army, monarchists, large landowners--had launched the "supreme attack" against the Republic and the people of Spain were well aware that their destiny was at stake. But the uprising in Spain represented more than just a "clerical-feudal" reaction against the Republic:

In the clash between the republic and clerico-feudal monarchism not only is the future of Spain at stake. All the fascisms of the world...support it, and with every means seek to facilitate the success of the seditionists...the Spanish experience has already shown that a revolution, if it does not wish to be ephemeral, cannot stop half-way, and that the respect for democratic legality... is the tomb of revolutionaries.⁸²

The situation was, in the literal sense of the word, a crisis in that after the uprising, Spain would be either socialist or fascist; the intermediary positions had been swept away.

The outcome of the struggle between a modern and proletarian Spain and a feudal and bourgeois Spain will probably determine the outcome of the social struggle in Europe for many years. If the revolution wins, it is, for our cause, a very important triumph...halting the frightening advance of fascism. If instead the counter-revolution gains the upper hand, it is the death toll for the last European democracies.⁸³

In a letter to Marion in early August,⁸⁴ Rosselli mistakenly thought that the conflict would take weeks "or perhaps months" to be resolved. The policy of "non-intervention" was a pathetic spectacle. It was a "scandal" that the French government refused to send airplanes when Mussolini had already sent twenty-

⁸²"La posta in gioco," in *GL*, 24 July 1936; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 392-94.

⁸³"Il dovere dei rivoluzionari," in *GL*, 31 July 1936; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 395-98.

⁸⁴Letter of 3 August 1936, AGL, reprinted in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, preface by Gaetano Salvemini, introduction by Aldo Garosci, Turin: Einaudi, 1967, p. 21.

one.⁸⁵ Hitler had already sent twenty-four Junker transport planes to Morocco by late July. Blum was caught in his knowledge of the gravity of the situation and his usual doubts. The Catholic Church, for its part, issued the papal encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* in March of 1937, blessing the crusade against "atheistic communism."⁸⁶

With his arrival in Barcelona during the first week in August 1936 noted by the police,⁸⁷ Rosselli was received by a contingent of FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica) and introduced to members of the CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) and POUM. He wrote back to Marion that for now, "it was a not a real war, a modern war, but rather a slow siege..."⁸⁸ Rosselli managed to hammer together an accord with the regional government of Catalonia to create an Italian antifascist column of volunteers. Members of Giustizia e Libertà joined with Italian anarchists to create the "Ascaso" Column.⁸⁹ Together, Rosselli and the republican Mario Angeloni shared command of this first group of 130 Italian volunteers; 90 infantry under the

⁸⁵For an excellent study of fascist Italy's support of Franco, see John F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.

⁸⁶Mangili-Climpson, p. 9.

⁸⁷ACS, busta 4221, fascicolo 4.

⁸⁸11 August 1936, a copy of the original (in French) is conserved in the AGL, sezione I, fascicolo 2, sottofascicolo 5, n. 3; reprinted in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, p. 25.

⁸⁹The Column was named after Francisco Ascaso, a Spanish anarchist killed in Barcelona in the early stages of the military uprising against the Republic. Lina Simonetti of Trieste joined the Column soon after its formation. For the important role of women in the Spanish Civil War, see Shirley Mangini, *Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices From the Spanish Civil War*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

command of Rosselli and 40 machine-gunners under Angeloni. Of this group, approximately 70-80 were anarchists, 20 were members of Giustizia e Libertà and the remainder either socialists, communists or republicans.⁹⁰ After a week, Rosselli returned to Paris where he tried to convince the other antifascists to volunteer in Spain. By the end of the month, he was back in Spain, on the Aragon front. By October of 1936, the first elements of the International Brigades had come together in Spain.

The Loyalists lacked everything except valor and enthusiasm. Arms were desperately needed and Rosselli placed what remained of his family patrimony at the service of the Republic. The attempts to purchase arms sometimes led to confusion, as when two representatives (one from Giustizia e Libertà the other a socialist) went to Belgium: presenting themselves as fascist arms merchants, they arranged for an arms shipment to be sent to Spain. The workers who were to transport the arms though, upon hearing of the "fascist" buyers, went on strike. The two representatives had to approach the leaders of the workers and reveal their true identity, after which the material was allowed to pass.⁹¹

Rosselli was also instrumental in helping to form André Malraux's air squadron, the only air defense of the Republic before the arrival of planes from the U.S.S.R. The pilot Giordano Viezzoli, a member of GL, volunteered for service in Malraux's squadron. On 30 September 1936 he was killed after a

⁹⁰Garosci, *Vita II*, p. 180.

⁹¹The episode is recounted in Garosci, *Vita II*, p. 165.

dogfight over the skies of Madrid.⁹² The fascist police, efficient as usual, were aware of an important meeting that took place in Malraux's house in late July or early August 1936. Malraux had invited his friend Leo Lagrange, Minister of Sport in the French government to discuss the possibility of French support for the Spanish Republic. Rosselli and Viezzoli were also present, along with the Russian writer Ilya Ehrenburg.⁹³ Malraux personally intervened that night to effect a reconciliation between Rosselli and Nicola Chiaromonte, a member of Giustizia e Libertà. Chiaromonte had gravitated to the non-violent anarchist groups in exile and had edited a volume of Andrea Caffi's writings called *A Critique of Violence*. During the Spanish Civil War though, he abandoned his pacifism and fought with Malraux's air squadron. Malraux based the character of Scali, the art historian who reads Plato at the front in his book *Man's Hope*, on Chiaromonte.⁹⁴

⁹²In December of 1936, Giuliano Viezzoli, who had received a medal of honor for his service in the first world war, sent a letter to the *podestà* (the ancient Roman term used by the fascists for "Mayor") of Trieste, his hometown:

...My son Giordano, born in Trieste, fought with a garibaldian faith in Spain, continued the same struggle for the freedom of peoples in which I believed in fighting the war. The lead of Italian bombs has ended his short life. It is not your victory! It is rather the shame of the decadence of the monarchy that you represent. I return the medal to you; make more bombs with it: with it you accelerate the final reckoning and the hour of the social revolution...

Quoted in Franco Fucci, *Ali contro Mussolini*, pp. 132-33. On Viezzoli's death, see *GL*, 9 October 1936.

⁹³ACS, busta 4221, fascicolo 4.

⁹⁴Chiaromonte (1905-1972) fled Europe in 1941 for north Africa, where he met and befriended Camus. Eventually he reached the United States and returned to Italy after the war. His essays on history, literature and the theater have been translated in *The Paradox of History: Stendahl, Tolstoy, Pasternak and Others*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985 and *The*

Although constantly moving from the front to Barcelona to Paris, Rosselli managed to set his personal thoughts down in a diary.⁹⁵ After meeting the anarcho-syndicalist leader Santillan ("one of the rare anarcho-syndicalist intellectuals"), Rosselli inquired as to when they would be leaving for the front? "*Mañana*," came the reply. In panic, Rosselli tried to explain that the column was not ready, that the men were exhausted and that it would be a few days before they were even familiar with their weapons and the most rudimentary tactics of warfare. It was only later that he began to realize what "*mañana*" really meant in Spain; some ambiguous and vague moment in the future. "*Mañana*--that fatal word--the key to the psychology and the technique of this adorable, but slow and disorganized, people. With the ample music of its three *as*, *mañana* seems to open up the entire future."⁹⁶

After several weeks, *mañana* finally arrived and the volunteers set off for the front:

The Ascaso column leaves in three rows. The *compañeros* make sure not to march in step, they make a concerted effort to not march in step. They do not wish to be confused with soldiers. They sing, they raise their fists. The joy of those departing is as visible as the vexation of those that remain behind.⁹⁷

Worm of Consciousness and Other Essays, ed. Miriam Chiaromonte, with a preface by Mary McCarthy. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976.

⁹⁵Published posthumously in three segments in *Giustizia e Libertà*: 9 July, 16 July and 23 August 1936; later reprinted as "Giornale d'un miliziano" in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, pp. 27-43; and as "Diario di Spagna" in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 399-414.

⁹⁶"Giornale d'un miliziano," in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, pp. 28-29. See also George Orwell's similar experience in his *Homage to Catalonia*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1952, pp. 12-13.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 29.

And in a passage reminiscent of George Orwell's description of the "multiform" rather than the uniform, Rosselli wrote in his diary:

[Barcelona] 19 August [1936]

Only the anonymous genius of the revolution could have invented this extraordinary, but at the same time natural, uniform: overalls. The war of the workers will be made with the uniform of labor. On 19 July, there was no time to undress. The workers left the factories in overalls to launch themselves against the soldiers. Five hundred died. But the revolution was victorious in the cities and now the workshop extends its sovereignty over the barracks.

The anarchist worker would have refused the uniform. He wears instead, without coercion, the overalls, his everyday dress. You fascists that minutely study the composition and colors of uniforms; Hitler, who recounts in *Mein Kampf* of having spent entire days in consultation with his tailor, and you, dogmatic revolutionaries, here is how the new uniform emerges. Carlyle could add a note to his *Sartor Resartus*. Yes, the clothes make the revolution.

The intellectual who dons the overalls for the first time feels an ineffable sentiment of joy. Here, I slough off my past, my bourgeois habits and wants, to consecrate myself to the cause of the workers. I enter the revolution with only body and soul. We will be brothers, comrades in overalls. Every distinction and rank disappears.⁹⁸

During that first eventful month of August in Spain, Rosselli reflected on his life in exile and the turn it was now taking:

...ten years of prison, deportations, escapes, exile and clandestine struggle. But it is natural, it is right, it is necessary. After having preached the necessity of intervention, one needs to participate personally; we, the intellectuals, without asking if our activity would have been more useful elsewhere. Besides, this human experience and this effort of consistency is worth more than any political mission.⁹⁹

That "human experience" characterized Rosselli's time in Spain, from the moment he crossed the border by train. Here is his description of a stop at the town of Tarassa on the night journey by rail to the front. It deserves to be quoted

⁹⁸"Giornale d'un miliziano," pp. 30-31.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 32.

at length:

The night swallows me up.

It is one o'clock. We are stopped in a station. A tremendous crowd--thousands and thousands--has invaded the sidewalks and tracks. Shouts, applause, they climb onto the car. Quick, grab. From the small window, where there is already a hoard of comrades, every gift of God enters. Melons, watermelons, bread, prosciutto, salami, wine, cheese.

"Long live the revolution!"

"Long live Spain!"

"Long live Italy!"

It is the offering of Tarassa to those departing for the front. The women are the most enthusiastic. During ten minutes, there is a frenetic discussion between train and station, between volunteers and the people. The entire city of Tarassa is in the station to greet the Italian volunteers. Everyone. The large industrial town has not slept for fifteen days. Every night it goes to greet the trains, to fete the volunteers.

Tarassa, Tarassa! The heart breaks. The conversations become more private. The *compagno* has found his *compagna*.

Now the train is ready to depart.

A speaker of the committee salutes us. "Answer," my comrades yell. I yell our thanks and our best wishes, in a spanishized Italian. The train moves, the crowd is gripped as if by a trembling, my comrades sing at the top of their voice to cover their emotion. I too have tears; here is the revolution in the moment of its immense fraternity; oh Spain, how worthy it is to fight for you, oh how one can be ready to give one's life, after Tarassa, for Tarassa, for all the infinite grey, monotonous, working-class Tarassas.

The secret anguish of the departure has disappeared from everyone's face. During the night, the train hosts an explosion of life. We pound each other on the shoulders, yell, and look deeply into each others moist eyes, and between a slice of watermelon and a sandwich, we shamelessly confess our faith.

Yes, it is worthwhile. Our Dulcinea is now called Tarassa.¹⁰⁰

The Italian "Ascaso" column received its baptism of fire at Monte Pelato on 28 August 1936, where, even though outnumbered and lacking proper weapons, they held their own against the forces of Franco. Tragically, Angeloni was killed in this first action and command of the Columns passed exclusively

¹⁰⁰Ibid., pp. 32-33.

to Rosselli who was slightly wounded by "an intelligent bullet." The battle raged for four hours in the early morning hours, ending abruptly at nine thirty.¹⁰¹ As Rosselli wrote in his diary: "The terrain and the sun direct the war. I have learned from conversations with the Spanish soldiers that war is conducted until 9 in the morning. Afterwards, the heat and the dryness impede any combat. And then the hours for the *comida*, meals, are sacred on both sides."¹⁰² Although Rosselli often made light of the dangers at the front, especially in the letters to Marion, the dangers were real enough: at Monte Pelato, the Italian Column lost Angeloni, and six others killed, including Giuseppe Zuddas, a colleague of Emilio Lussu in the Sardinian Action Party and member of the Central Committee of GL. Aldo Garosci and three others were wounded. "Angeloni died like a classic hero: 'Farewell comrades'--he cried from the embankment where he was over-exposed. He sang the *Internazionale*, spoke of his family and was conscious until the end...He told the Spaniards that it was beautiful and easy to die for freedom."¹⁰³ Rosselli himself was in effect lost to the volunteers as he retreated to a Swiss ambulance to tend to his wound.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹On the battle of Monte Pelato, see Garosci, *Vita II*, pp. 183-187 and Umberto Calosso, "La battaglia di Monte Pelato," in *No al fascismo*, pp. 237-53.

¹⁰²"Giornale d'un miliziano," in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, p.42.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁰⁴He described the event to Marion in a letter:
 ...the alarm had been given and I climbed atop the trench; I was observing the zone in the early light of dawn when the first bullets began to fly. I felt a very light blow on the right side. No pain. I climbed down into the trench, saw that I was losing a little bit of blood, and brought myself to the infirmary. A very fortunate bullet: superficial entrance and exit, no injury, no pain...*I feel that I will return*, as I felt, although I didn't tell you, that the honor of the first bullet

After the battle of Monte Pelato, the Italians were regarded with new respect and Rosselli was asked to participate in several "war councils" at the front. This granted him greater influence in the planning of the war yet diminished his efficiency as commander of the Ascaso Column and was part of two larger problems that were to hinder the Loyalists: the first was a dispute between Rosselli and the members of *Giustizia e Libertà* with the Italian and Spanish anarchists; the second, indirectly related to the first, was the vehement debate surrounding the "militarization" of the volunteers.¹⁰⁵

Central to this dispute was the relationship between Rosselli and the Italian anarchist Camillo Berneri.¹⁰⁶ Writing for both Salvemini's *L'Unità* in Florence and Piero Gobetti's *Rivoluzione liberale* in Turin, Berneri joined the anarchist circles after a brief membership in the Socialist Party. He had been among the early supporters of the *Non Mollare!* group in Florence in 1925 and had fled to France but was expelled in 1934. He eventually found his way to Spain, where he joined the members of *Giustizia e Libertà* in the Ascaso Column and fought at the battle of Monte Pelato. Even before Spain, Rosselli and Berneri had worked together; in the pages of *Giustizia e Libertà*, Berneri had written a

(extremely intelligent) would be mine. Letter of 31 August 1936, emphasis in the original; reprinted in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, pp. 46-48.

¹⁰⁵See Garosci, *Vita* II, pp. 189-200; Garosci refuses to condemn either side, holding that under revolutionary conditions, it was difficult to see who was correct.

¹⁰⁶For the dispute between the two, see Camillo Berneri, "La polemica con Carlo Rosselli," in the collection of his works, *Pietrogrado 1917-Barcellona 1937*, eds. Pier Carlo Masini and Alberto Sorti. Milan: SugarCo, 1964, pp. 161-182.

long defense of anarchism and the compatibility of that doctrine with Rosselli's thinking.¹⁰⁷ For Berneri, Rosselli's critique of Marx was in a long line of Italian anarchist thinkers such as Errico Malatesta, Stefano Merlino and Luigi Fabbri; yet there were also points of diversion between the two camps. Rosselli was clear in pointing out that anarchism was still tied to the nineteenth century, while *Giustizia e Libertà* represented a "new phenomenon..that responded to the demands of a diverse society."¹⁰⁸ For all the infighting between the anarchists and *Giustizia e Libertà*, Rosselli remained a strong admirer of the anarchists and their "revolt against history."

I spent seventy-five days at the front and in the trenches with the anarchists. I admire them. The Catalonian anarchists are one of the heroic avant-gardes of the western revolution. With them a new world has been born which is beautiful to serve.¹⁰⁸

"Catalonian anarchism," Rosselli declared in a speech over Radio Barcelona, "is a constructive socialism, sensitive to the problems of freedom and culture. Every day it furnishes proof of its realistic qualities."¹⁰⁹ When the Italian anarchist Antonio Cieri was killed at the front of Huesca, Rosselli wrote a sincere and moving obituary in the pages of *Giustizia e Libertà*.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷Camillo Berneri, "Difesa dell'anarchismo," in *GL*, 6 December 1935.

¹⁰⁸Rosselli's reply is quoted in Garosci *Vita* II, p. 191.

¹⁰⁸"Catalogna, baluardo della rivoluzione," in *GL*, 27 November 1936; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 419.

¹⁰⁹Speech over Radio Barcelona, 13 November 1936; published in *GL*, 27 November 1936; now in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, pp. 70-75 and *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 424-28.

¹¹⁰"L'eroica morte di Antonio Cieri sul fronte di Huesca," in *GL*, 16 April 1937; now in *Scritti dell'esilio*, pp. 495-97.

Catalonia, the stronghold of Spanish anarchism was, for Rosselli, the "bulwark of the revolution." Anarcho-sindacalism, which had been defamed and misunderstood, was demonstrating itself to be capable of constructive work.¹¹¹ Catalanian anarchism was in the great tradition of Bakunin and Proudhon; from Sorel, it had recognized the danger and paralysis of bureaucratic and reformist socialism. Its greatest figure, the educator and martyr Francisco Ferrer, embodied its character of libertarian humanism. Catalonia was now witnessing the birth of a new form of social democracy, the synthesis of the theory and praxis of the Russian experience with the legacy of the West.¹¹²

In a way, the debate taking place in Spain resembled the conflict with the Concentrazione Antifascista in Paris. Were the volunteer columns representatives of the old parties or should they be, as Rosselli maintained, the nuclei of new political formations?

The problem of military discipline was compounded by the fact that many of the volunteers were never professional soldiers. The large contingent of anarchists naturally viewed any attempt to impose a hierarchy with suspicion. In a clear indication of the prevailing sentiment, posters appeared in the streets of Barcelona: *Soldato? Nunca! Miliciano del pueblo.*¹¹³ Rosselli's close ties with the military and political leaders in defense of the Republic made him a favorite

¹¹¹"Catalogna, baluardo della rivoluzione," pp. 415-423.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 417.

¹¹³Garosci, *Vita II*, p. 197.

target of those who thought that no military organization or discipline was necessary. Ferdinand De Rosa's death on 16 September, because of inadequate preparation and organization, lent force to Rosselli's argument.

During the first days of September 1936, the representatives of the various antifascist organizations fighting in Spain gathered, at the behest of the socialists and communists, in order to examine the possibility of a united antifascist front against Franco. The meeting ended with a proposal to form a Popular Front at the service of the republican government still in Madrid.¹¹⁴ Representing *Giustizia e Libertà* were Alberto Cianca and Franco Venturi. Ironically, the very position that Rosselli was insisting on--the formation of a united antifascist front--was the development that would diminish his influence in Spain. Finally culminating in the formation of the Garibaldi Battalion, this strategy left Rosselli with less power than in the first days of the insurrection. Yet he maintained an almost naive optimism during 1936.¹¹⁵

The question of organization was of critical importance in Spain:

The essential problem of the revolution which I believe has not been solved either here or elsewhere, is that of revolutionary command. The revolution was, first of all, against the old military caste. And it is absurd that the revolution, transforming itself in war, uses or allows itself to be used, by the old officer corps...

But it is particular to popular revolutions that they do not know how to address and resolve the problems with rectilinear logic. Revolutions have a course like natural phenomena. They drowse for months, allowing errors and

¹¹⁴Garosci, *Vita II*, p. 203.

¹¹⁵"I know that many in France are pessimistic. I remain optimistic. Such a great popular movement cannot be crushed..." Letter to Marion Rosselli, 16 September 1936; now in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, p.51.

dangers to accumulate, until a start permits them to resolve in a day the most insolvable problems, precisely with the simplicity and rigor of a natural and necessary fact. Here we are waiting for that day.¹¹⁶

Rosselli left Paris, where he had gone to recuperate from his wound and returned to Barcelona on 7 November.¹¹⁷ Toledo, forty miles south of Madrid had fallen to the rebel forces just a few weeks earlier. Relations with the anarchists were increasingly strained, requiring "the patience of Job," as he wrote to his wife; "I feel within me an enormous energy, but also an inadequacy and pain for such a wait. It's a problem with all revolutions, with all creations."¹¹⁸ Recognizing that the question of an efficient control and use of men and arms was the central problem of the revolution, Rosselli proposed the transformation of the volunteer brigades into formal, fully mechanized divisions capable of offensive capabilities.¹¹⁹ It was absolutely necessary that the volunteers be reorganized on a more technical basis without in any way abandoning or losing their revolutionary fervor. It was not possible to continue with the present system, geared to a "war of position," and incapable of an offensive or "war of movement." The "state of siege" mentality of the Loyalists was suicidal and

¹¹⁶Letter of 15 October 1936 to Marion; now in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, pp. 54-54.

¹¹⁷Aldo Garosci, "Le diverse fase dell'intervento di Giustizia e Libertà nella guerra civile di Spagna," in *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, pp. 399-408.

¹¹⁸Letter of 12 November 1936; now in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, p.66.

¹¹⁹Rosselli's proposal was drafted in the form of a letter to the military and political command of the "Ascaso" Column, 13 November 1936; printed in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, p. 67.

prohibited fighting the war as a social revolution.¹²⁰

The same day that Rosselli sent the proposal, he gave what was to be his most important speech, over Radio Barcelona. It was an act that probably sealed his fate in convincing Mussolini to order his assassination. The radio had been effectively used by the Loyalists for propaganda and Rosselli was asked to do a broadcast that would be transmitted into Italy. In stirring and ringing phrases, he urged Italians in Italy to support the Spanish Republic as the first step in overthrowing fascism in Europe:

Comrades, Italian brothers, listen.

An Italian volunteer speaks to you by radio from Barcelona to bring you the greetings of thousands of exiled Italian antifascist volunteers who are fighting in the ranks of the revolutionary army.¹²¹

The phrase "Comrades, Italians, listen. An Italian volunteer speaks to you by radio from Barcelona" was repeated several times throughout the speech, acting as a refrain. Rosselli tied the volunteer and exile tradition to the most famous and glorious names in recent Italian history: Santarosa in Greece; Garibaldi in the Americas; Mazzini in England; Pisacane in France; all fighting for justice and freedom. What were the volunteers fighting for? A new order based on freedom and social justice:

In the workshops, the *padrone* no longer rules, but the collective through

¹²⁰Rosselli expanded on this theme in "Storia di una importante vittoria mancata," a report sent to the Military Command of the Aragon Front; published in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, pp. 78-90 and *Scritti dell'esilio*, pp. 429-39.

¹²¹"Oggi in Spagna domani in Italia", speech over Radio Barcelona, 13 November 1936, published in *GL*; now in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, pp. 70-75 and *Scritti dell'esilio II*, pp. 424-28.

factory councils and unions. In the fields you will no longer find the worker constrained in exhausting work for the interest of others. The peasant is master of the land he cultivates, under the control of the municipalities. In the offices, the workers and technicians no longer obey a hierarchy of poppa's boys, but a new hierarchy founded on capability and free choice. They obey, or rather collaborate, because in revolutionary Spain, and above all in libertarian Catalonia, the most audacious social advances are being made respecting the personality of man and the autonomy of human groups. Communism, yes, but libertarian communism. Socialization of the large industries and large-scale trade, but not statolotry; the socialization of the means of production and exchange is conceived as a means to free man from all forms of slavery.¹²²

In a direct appeal to Italians, Rosselli told them that

...Every day airplanes furnished by Italian fascism and piloted by mercenary aviators who dishonor our country launch bombs against defenseless cities, killing women and children. Every day Italian bombs constructed with Italian hands, transported by Italian ships, launched by Italian cannons, fall in the trenches of the workers. Franco would have already lost some time ago, if it were not for the powerful fascist aid. It must be shameful for Italians to know that their government, the government of a people that was at one time in the avant-garde of the struggle for freedom, attempts to assassinate the freedom of the Spanish people!¹²³

Two weeks later, Rosselli was sent a telegram by Garcia Oliver who requested his assistance in Valencia. Since his ties with the Italian "Ascaso" Column had continued to degenerate because of disputes with the anarchists, Rosselli submitted his resignation on 6 December 1936. Unfortunately, a relapse of phlebitis was to prevent him from taking up his new duties in Valencia.¹²⁴ In letters to Alberto Cianca who remained in Paris to assume editorial

¹²²*Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, p. 72.

¹²³*Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹²⁴The telegram from Garcia Oliver and the attack of phlebitis are recounted in his letter to Marion, 5 December 1936; both this letter and his letter of resignation dated 6 December 1936, are now in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, pp. 91-92.

responsibilities for *Giustizia e Libertà*, Rosselli wrote that by December a definitive rupture had occurred in the Italian Section. The conflict was not between Spaniards and Italians, but between *giellisti* and anarchists. "In Catalonia, there is a period of rather acute crisis. A minority faction of anarchists opposes semi-militarization which is now indispensable..."¹²⁵ And concluded: "...the old Italian section no longer exists. There exists a new Giacomo Matteotti Battalion, open to all..."¹²⁶

By the end of 1936, Rosselli's characteristic optimism was giving way in the face of mounting difficulties. The continued "non-intervention" of France and England, along with the war material flowing to Franco's forces from fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, made the international picture bleak. Within Spain there were continuing disputes among the defenders of the Republic, with ideological demands handicapping the prosecution of the war. A note of exasperation began to creep into his letters:

If it were not for a perfectly tranquil conscience and the conviction of having done everything possible and impossible to avoid these nefarious and foolish sectarian pitfalls, I would have had many bitter days. Fortunately, I begin to armor myself and nothing and no one surprises me any more. I love human beings as an abstraction and the individual person. But the group, the association, with some exceptions, appears to me every day more deficient and at time insupportable.¹²⁷

¹²⁵Letter of 1 January 1937, *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, p.98.

¹²⁶Letter to Alberto Cianca, 16 December 1936; now in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, p.94. In a letter the same day to Marion, Rosselli repeated that the new Giacomo Matteotti Battalion would be open to all committed antifascists, but it had to be based on "a serious discipline and organization, excluding every form of sectarianism." *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹²⁷Letter to Marion, 16 December 1936, in *ibid.*, p. 95.

It is possible that for all the talk of Spain and Italy being "Latin sisters," an historical and cultural gulf existed between the two. Spain had not gone through the crucible of the Great War and the people had long-standing hatred of the army. The necessity of creating a revolutionary army, with cadres, armaments and discipline was sometimes lost on the Spaniards, Rosselli felt. Slow, disordered and sometimes chaotic, Spain was also hindered by a certain mentality that Rosselli thought he detected in the people--"the tragic *mañana*"--that was incompatible with fighting a revolution.¹²⁸ Earlier, he had made the curious remark that "It is difficult to take this war seriously."¹²⁹

Back in Paris to recuperate from the phlebitis, Rosselli continued to organize men and arms for the Spanish republicans. He returned to the offices of *Giustizia e Libertà*, and wrote several penetrating essays on the course of the war in Spain¹³⁰ and the unfolding of developments in Europe.¹³¹ In February,

¹²⁸The phrase appears in an essay "Sul corso della guerra," written when Rosselli was back in Paris, *GL*, 15 January 1937; reprinted in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, pp. 99-101; also in *Scritti dell'esilio II*, pp. 442-44.

¹²⁹"È difficile prendere sul serio questa guerra," was made in the context of a patrol by the Italian Column that came across a rebel stronghold. Although the alarm had been given, and both sides had spotted their enemies, no shots were fired. "Giornale d'un miliziano," in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, p. 43; also in "Diario di Spagna," in *Scritti dell'esilio II*, p. 414.

¹³⁰The last essays on the Spanish Civil War, all in *Giustizia e Libertà* in 1937 were "Nostra guerra," 12 February; "La Spagna è sola," 19 February; "L'eroica morte di Antonio Cieri sul fronte Huesca," 16 April; "Per una Guadalajara in terra italiana," 23 April; "Guerra e politica in Spagna," 7 May; "Dopo le giornate di Barcellona," 14 May; "Crisi in Spagna," 21 May; "Mediazione impossibile," 28 May. All are reprinted in *Scritti dell'esilio II*, pp. 468-545 passim.

¹³¹See especially "Riflessioni sullo stato d'Europa," 29 January 1936; "La situazione in Italia," 5 February 1937; "La crociata antisovietica," 26 February 1937; and "Alla ricerca di farfalle sotto gli archi di Tito e di Brandeburgo," 11 June 1937, all in *Giustizia e Libertà*; now in *Scritti dell'esilio II*, pp. 453-57; 463-67; 475-79; 549-54.

speaking to volunteers in Argenteuil about to depart for the front, Rosselli reiterated the reasons for fighting in Spain. The volunteers were headed for "the ideal *patria*," the one the exiles had been fighting for in Italy. As for many others, fighting for the Spanish Republic was a defining experience, for Rosselli, it even could be considered a metamorphosis:

I must confess that after the long years of exile, it was only when I passed the borders of Spain, when I enrolled in the peoples' militias and donned the overalls, the symbolic uniform of armed labor and embraced the rifle that I felt a free man again, in the fullness of my dignity.¹³²

After more than a decade of persecution, arrests, trials, imprisonment and exile, the antifascists could finally feel themselves to be part of a larger community. The stigma of exile, though worn with fierce pride, could be set aside in a larger cause. After years of having to ask, beg and receive, the antifascists were finally able to give, to contribute, to establish themselves as a positive force, fighting *for* something. The Spanish experience had opened new horizons and possibilities. Rosselli recounted the episode at the train station of Tarassa to the departing volunteers as an example of the tremendous cauldron of humanity that they were about to enter. Spain was a decisive turning point in the history of Italian antifascism: "The myth of an antifascist that does not fight is ended. The defamation of an Italian proletariat incapable of reacting to fascism is ended. The academy of exile in which an ungrateful destiny seemed to condemn us is

¹³²Speech to volunteers at Argenteuil, France, 10 February 1936; partially printed posthumously in *GL*, 18 June 1937; then in *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, pp. 110-14 and *Scritti dell'esilio II*, pp. 458-62.

ended."¹³³ The intervention in Spain would be the bridge that would bind the antifascists to Italy and act as a catalyst for a humanistic, socialist revolution in Italy. The antifascists would lead the Italian people from their servitude and passivity into a new period of history when they would be active, conscious agents of their own fate. For Spain, for Italy, for the new socialist revolution, "it is worth it--if necessary--to die."¹³⁴

That necessity was borne by Antonio Gramsci who died on 27 April 1937 after eleven years in fascist prisons. *Giustizia e Libertà* devoted a six-column headline and the first page to his death, calling it a "slow assassination."¹³⁵ Rosselli wrote a commentary which placed Gramsci with Gobetti as a heroic martyr: "Ils seront reconnus un jour comme les prophètes de l'Italie libre qui se construit aujourd'hui par l'esprit et par une lutte très dure." For Rosselli, Gramsci was the very incarnation of the revolutionary ascetic.¹³⁶ On 22 May, at the Gymnase Huygens in Paris, a service was held in Gramsci's memory. Among the speakers were Marchel Cachin, editor of the French *Humanité*, Egidio Gennari of the PCd'I, Bruno Buozzi of the PSI and Carlo Rosselli. In his speech, just two weeks before his own death, Rosselli contrasted Gramsci and Mussolini as two different types of politics and two different types of humanity.

¹³³*Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, p. 112.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹³⁵*Giustizia e Libertà*, 30 April 1930.

¹³⁶"Portrait de la nouvelle opposition en Italie," in *GL*, 7 May 1937, signed "Curzio."

While Mussolini was "bruyant, irrationnel, improvisateur, démagogue, aventurier, traître à l'idéal de sa jeunesse," Gramsci was "intime, réservé, rationnel, sévère, ennemi de la rhétorique et de toute sorte de facilité, fidèle à la classe ouvrière dans la bonne comme dans la mauvaise fortune..."¹³⁷

Assassination

This type of antifascist--the prosaic hero--was destined to be killed.¹³⁸

Still afflicted with the painful phlebitis, Rosselli left Paris and arrived at the mud-bath resort of Bagnoles-sur-l'Orne in Normandy on 27 May. He took a room at the Hôtel Cordier. Coincidentally (or perhaps not), the Duke of Ajmone, of the Royal House of Savoy, was also in the resort town.¹³⁹ Marion soon joined him and Nello arrived on 6 June.¹⁴⁰ That day they visited Maison Blanche, the home of the historian Elie Halévy, together with Raymond Aron.¹⁴¹ Carlo had established a daily routine at the spa, taking the cure in the

¹³⁷"Due climi politici: due tipi di umanità," speech of 22 May 1937, published posthumously in *GL*, 18 June 1937; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 543-45.

¹³⁸Carlo Rosselli, "Eroe tutto prosa," in *Scritti dell'esilio* I, p. 268.

¹³⁹Franco Bandini, *Il cono d'ombra: chi armò la mano degli assassini dei fratelli Rosselli*, Milan: SugarCo, 1990, pp. 34-39. Bandini's work has been important in reconstructing the events surrounding the assassination of the Rosselli brothers, yet it often seems as though the author were more intent on character assassination than historical reconstruction.

¹⁴⁰Nello's request for a passport had been granted with such efficiency and so quickly that friends, especially Piero Calamandrei in Florence, were suspicious. Calamandrei warned him not to go to France, fearing that the regime was following him and preparing some kind of action against the brothers.

¹⁴¹Raymond Aron, "Incontro con i fratelli Rosselli," in *Countrepoint*, n. 18, 1975, p. 166.

morning, working in his room until the late afternoon and then going for a drive in the countryside with his Ford car which had survived from the front in Spain. This routine was duly noted by several spies who had also arrived in the resort town soon after him.

On the afternoon of the 9th, Carlo and Nello drove Marion to the train station and watched her depart for Paris where she would help celebrate little Mirtillino's 10th birthday.

On the return trip to the hotel the brothers usually avoided the heavy traffic of the main road and turned instead onto a side road that led past the forest at Couterne. Knowing this beforehand, the assassins had pulled over to the side of the road, giving the impression of mechanical failure. The brothers, arriving upon the "disabled" vehicle, stopped the car and approached to assist the driver. It was at this point that they were attacked and killed. Carlo was killed by four dagger thrusts, two of which severed the carotid artery; Nello was attacked by less efficient murderers, suffered many dagger wounds and appears to have resisted in some attempt at defense. An autopsy later revealed bullet wounds as well. The bodies were dragged a short distance and left in the underbrush by the side of the road, a dagger nearby. The assassins drove off, taking Carlo's Ford, but abandoning it several miles later. It was found the next day with a bomb, whose fuse had failed, in the back seat. The possessions of the

two brothers were not touched. The bodies were not found until two days later.¹⁴² There was an eyewitness to the scene: Helene Besneux, a hairdresser, was bicycling on the road by the forest when she came upon the scene of the automobiles. Three days later, on 12 June, she reported to the authorities that she had seen a pool of blood and that one of the men had seen her, given her a murderous look, and then driven off.¹⁴³

News of the double assassination shocked and stunned the antifascist community. A crowd estimated at between 100,000 to 200,000¹⁴⁴ people attended the funeral services in Paris and the cortege made its way to the Père Lachaise cemetery accompanied by the music of Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony. There, the brothers were laid to rest under the following inscription:

CARLO AND NELLO ROSSELLI
MURDERED TOGETHER
THE 9th JUNE 1937
EXPECT TOGETHER
THAT THE SACRIFICE OF THEIR YOUTH
WILL HASTEN
IN ITALY

¹⁴²Gaetano Salvemini, *Carlo and Nello Rosselli: A Memoir*, London: For Intellectual Liberty, 1937, pp. 65-68; Id., "L'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," in *No al fascismo*, pp. 255-304; id., "The Rosselli Murders," in *The New Republic*, 18 August 1937; see also Charles F. Delzell, "The Assassination of Carlo and Nello Rosselli, June 9, 1937: Closing a Chapter of Italian Anti-Fascism," in *Italian Quarterly* XXVIII, n. 107, Winter 1987, pp. 47-64; Pierre Guillen, "La risonanza in Francia dell'azione di Giustizia e Libertà e dell'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," in *Giustizia e Libertà nella lotta antifascista e nella storia d'Italia*, pp. 239-60.

¹⁴³Salvemini, "L'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," in *No al fascismo*, p. 257.

¹⁴⁴Emilio Lussu testified at the trial of General Roatta that "The day of the funerals, the immense boulevard that led to Père Lachaise cemetery was filled with more than 300,000 persons, of all countries. Not only Paris, but all of Europe was present that day." His testimony is reproduced in *Il processo Roatta: i documenti*, Rome: Donatello De Luigi, 1945, pp 82-84.

THE VICTORY OF THEIR IDEALS JUSTICE AND LIBERTY

Almost thirteen years later to the day, the antifascist cause was struck by "a second Matteotti case."¹⁴⁵

The fascist press tried to link the assassinations to conflicts within the antifascist community, implicitly accusing the communists, anarchists and allies of Giustizia e Libertà. The recent murder of the anarchists Camillo Berneri and Francesco Barbieri at the hands of Stalin's agents in Spain gave this story "credibility." Not coincidentally, the most aggressive support of this theory was taken up by *Il Telegrafo*, the daily newspaper of Livorno, under the editorship of Giovanni Ansaldo and controlled by Count Galeazzo Ciano, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Mussolini's son-in-law.¹⁴⁶ People however were not fooled. For Salvemini, "all roads lead to Rome."¹⁴⁷ Ansaldo had made the

¹⁴⁵The phrase is Salvemini's, "L'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," p. 258. Twelve years later (1949) a monument was erected in the forest of Bagnoles-Sur-l'Orne to mark the site of the assassinations. Carlo Sergio Signori was commissioned to create the monument, a stark and poignant design that was, according to the artist Gino Severini, "the first abstract monument in France. The abstraction of the forms expresses a mysterious and moving grandeur that is tied to the tragedy." Amelia Rosselli wrote that "the work [was] extremely noble and significant in its austere simplicity." In Luciano Galmozzi, *Monumenti alla libertà: antifascismo, resistenza e pace nei monumenti italiani dal 1945 al 1985*. Milan: La Pietra, 1986, pp. 41-42.

¹⁴⁶On 12 June, *Il Telegrafo* wrote that the assassination was the result of "suppression" due to the "hatreds among the diverse extremist sects of antifascism." Ansaldo wrote that "...Rosselli, who recently had become a communist, had expressed, in private and in public, his approval of the 'suppression' of Berneri. This approval attracted the hatred of the Italian and Catalan anarchists living in France...;" the next day the paper insisted that Rosselli "had fallen almost certainly because of some anarchist vendetta...;" quoted in Salvemini, "L'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," pp. 258-59, note 1.

¹⁴⁷Salvemini, *Carlo and Nello Rosselli: A Memoir*, p. 68.

treacherous journey from antifascist outsider to fascist insider with relative ease. As Rosselli had written in 1935, "The Ansaldo case is symbolic. It is the case of so many bourgeois and Italian intellectuals. It is, in a man, the entire Italian crisis." ¹⁴⁸

The first document entered into evidence at the trial of Italian officials involved with the murders was prepared by the SIM (Servizio Informazioni Militare--Military Intelligence). After specifying various acts of sabotage (including germ warfare), it states simply:

5) Suppression of bothersome persons in various localities.
Means: various, preferably poison. ¹⁴⁹

Proof of fascist authorship of the assassination is provided by the fascist regime. In the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome, a document prepared by the Director of the Political Police Division (signature illegible) on 1 February 1939 lists more than 50 antifascist volunteers killed in the Spanish Civil War. Listed as #12850 is "Carlo Rosselli, founder of *Giustizia e Libertà*, wounded at Monte Pelato, assassinated near Paris, *by fascists*, the 11th [sic] June 1937, together with his brother Nello." ¹⁵⁰

Amelia Pincherle Rosselli bore the deaths of her two sons with dignity and stoic resignation. Years later, the president of the Italian Republic and former colleague of Carlo Rosselli, Sandro Pertini wrote that she seemed to emerge from

¹⁴⁸"Osceno Ansaldo," in *GL*, 20 September 1935; now in *Scritti dell'esilio* II, pp. 214-16.

¹⁴⁹Clara Conti, *Servizio segreto*, Rome: Donatello De Luigi, 1945, p. 112.

¹⁵⁰ACS, Busta 4421, fascicolo 4. Emphasis added.

the terrible events of June 1937 "like the heroine of a Corneille tragedy."¹⁵¹ Marion lived for another 12 years, but as Salvemini wrote at her passing in 1949, after the death of Carlo her life was "a painful descent toward death."¹⁵²

It soon became clear that the assassins were members of the French *Cagoule*, a secret extreme right-wing sect known for the hooded cape of its followers with ties to the French secret services and the secret society CSAR (Comité secret d'action révolutionnaire).¹⁵³ Evidently, the assassins had been following Rosselli closely for at least several months, if not longer. On 15 February 1938 Marion Rosselli recognized one of those arrested in the case, Fernand Ladislav Jakubiez, who posed as a travelling carpet salesman who appeared one morning at their house in Paris during the autumn of 1936, asking suspicious questions about Carlo. In the spring of 1936, a certain Carlo Zanatta presented himself to members of Giustizia e Libertà in Paris, claiming to be an army deserter with information against a communist party member. Under questioning, it became apparent that his entire story was false; bursting into tears, he revealed that he had concealed a loaded pistol in the belt of his trousers. He had been approached by an *agent provocateur* at the Italian Consulate in Paris

¹⁵¹"She was always an exemplary wife, mother, grandmother; a very fine writer, truly worthy to be remembered among the great Italians of this century." Sandro Pertini, Presentation to Aldo Rosselli, *La famiglia Rosselli; una tragedia italiana*, Milan: Bompiani, 1983, p. vi.

¹⁵²"Marion Rosselli," in *Il Ponte* V, n. 11, November 1949, pp. 1443.

¹⁵³On the *cagoule*, see Philippe Bourdel, *Le Cagoule*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1970 and Christian Bernadac, *Dagore. Les cahiers secrets de la Cagoule*, Paris: France Empire Ed., 1977; see also J.R. Tournoux, *L'Histoire Secrète: La Cagoule, le Front Populaire, Vichy, Londres, Deuxième Bureau l'Algerie Française, L'OAS*, Paris: Plon, 1962 and Douglas Porch, *The French Secret Services: From the Dreyfus Affair to the Gulf War*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995.

with instructions to assassinate Rosselli.¹⁵⁴

The assassination of the Rosselli brothers and the explosion of a bomb at the building of the National Confederation of French Charities on 11 September 1937 forced the French authorities to investigate the *cagouleurs*. Their work turned up more than one hundred individuals. On 12 January 1938, Minister of the Interior of the Blum government Max Dormoy announced the arrest of seven individuals related to the Rosselli murders Jean Filliol, Fernand Jakubiez, Robert G. E. Purieux, Jean Marie Bouvyer, L.C. Huguet, André Tenaille¹⁵⁵ and J. Foran. Five were already under arrest; Huguet and Filliol were being sought. One of the automobiles used in the assassination belonged to Eugene Deloncle, one of the leaders of the CSAR.

A serious shortcoming of the investigation was that it failed to admit that there was any Italian connection to the assassinations. In January of 1938 the French daily *Matin* reported that Dormoy had noted that the weapons of the *cagouleurs* came from beyond France's borders; another official in the French police force cited "the number of arms, rifles, machine-guns of Italian manufacture" found in the investigation.¹⁵⁶ But soon after these announcements the Blum government fell and was replaced in January 1938 by Daladier who

¹⁵⁴Marion's identification of Jakubiez is recounted in Salvemini, "L'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," p. 263; the Zanatta episode can be found in Garosci, *Vita II*, pp. 147-48.

¹⁵⁵Tenaille had been identified by Helene Besneux, the hairdresser who was riding by the scene of the murders.

¹⁵⁶*Matin*, 13 January 1938, quoted in Salvemini, "L'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," p. 264.

sought to appease Mussolini at all costs in the futile hope of distancing Italy from Nazi Germany. Consequently, for reasons of international politics, all future work on the assassinations and the *cagouards* was confined within France's borders. With the fall of France and the creation of the Vichy regime, all were freed under Marshal Pétain. Dormoy was arrested by the Vichy regime and later killed during the night of 25-26 July 1941 by a bomb placed under his bed.

At the end of the war, with the fall of the Pétain regime, a new inquiry was initiated against the *cagouards*. André Tenaille had died fighting for the Nazis on the Russian front; for his services, he was posthumously awarded the Legion of Honor by the Pétain government.¹⁵⁷ Eugene Deloncle, after entering the service of the Nazis was killed by the Gestapo; François Metenier became head of Pétain's bodyguard.¹⁵⁸ Métenier, Jakubiez and Puireux were arrested and imprisoned; Filliol, Bouvyer, Foran and Huguet could not be found. On 6 June 1945, Jakubiez gave the following account of what happened on 9 June 1937:

...We went to Bagnoles. I was in Filliol's car with Puireux and Baillet,¹⁵⁹ while Alice¹⁶⁰ and Bouvyer went in Fauran's car. We had lunch in two different restaurants nearby. When we met, Filliol let us know what we were to do, giving us precise instructions. We knew that the two Rossellis would have lunch where Fauran, Bouvyer and Alice went. When the two Rossellis left the restaurant, we followed them with our car. They were accompanied by a woman [Marion], whom they left at the station of Bagnoles. Then they went toward

¹⁵⁷*La France*, 17 September 1942.

¹⁵⁸Salvemini, "L'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," p. 265.

¹⁵⁹Jakubiez substituted Baillet, whom he thought had been killed in the Resistance, for Tenaille.

¹⁶⁰Alice Lamy was the wife of Filliol. On 30 November 1945, she confessed to being present on 9 June 1937, but admitted nothing else.

Alençon, and we followed them. After having made some purchases in Alençon, the Rosselli took the road toward Bagnoles. At a certain point, Filliol's car, in which I was riding, passed that of the Rosselli and cut them off. Filliol got out of the car with Baillet, pretending there was some mechanical problem. Rosselli's car came to a stop. Carlo remained at the wheel. The brother got out. Filliol, who was bent over the hood as if searching for the problem, brusquely arose and discharged his *parabellum*¹⁶¹ against Nello, who fell. Baillet rushed toward the car, where Carlo was still at the wheel, and shot him. Carlo was killed in an instant. His brother, gravely wounded, had fallen into the ravine. I stabbed him two or three times with a dagger; Filliol finished him off with the pistol. The dagger that was found at the site was mine. Filliol kept his. It was he who gave us all the same daggers. Puireux remained at the wheel of his car during the affair. The occupants of the second car, who saw the crime, turned around in the direction of Paris. Baillet and I threw the bodies in the forest on the edge of the road. Filliol searched the bodies and took some papers, that were sent to Italy, as I discovered later. I got into the car of the victims together with Baillet; we abandoned it after several kilometers.¹⁶²

Although Jakubiez had confessed in June 1945, the trial of the *cagouards* did not take place until 11-28 November 1948. Jakubiez was sentenced to life at hard labor; Metenier was sentenced to twenty years hard labor; Puireux, four years of hard labor; those charged *in absentia* were sentenced to death. (Curiously and conveniently, both in France and in Italy, death sentences were usually handed down to those *in absentia*). No mention was made of Italians involved in the assassination.¹⁶³ Yet the evidence points to the fact that the Italian fascist police were watching Rosselli at the Hôtel Cordier.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹The P 38 was a weapon adopted by the German army in 1908 and remained the infantry pistol until 1938; Bandini, p. 446, note 12.

¹⁶²Testimony reproduced in Salvemini, "L'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," pp. 293-94.

¹⁶³The sentences were reported in *Le Monde*, 29 November 1948.

¹⁶⁴The document, "Highly Classified" (RISSERVATISSIMA RACCOMANDATA) is found in the ACS, busta 4221, fascicolo 4.

In Italy, the prosecution of those responsible for the Rosselli assassinations degenerated into absurdity. Attempts to place high fascist officials on trial were often haphazard, with some minor officials convicted while major party functionaries were either ignored or forgotten about. As early as July 1944, with publication of Decreto legislativo luogotenenziale # 159, a High Commission for Sanctions Against Fascism had been established under the overall direction of former Foreign Minister Carlo Sforza. The Decreto actually called for the creation of four commissions: one to deal with property seized from the Fascist Party; another to sequester fascist profits; a third, under the direction of Mario Berlinguer,¹⁶⁵ concerned with prosecuting fascists; and a fourth, under Mauro Scoccimarro,¹⁶⁶ to purge fascists from the government.¹⁶⁷

Judge Italo Robino of the High Commission for the Punishment of Fascist Crimes questioned General Cesare Amé, of SIM--the agency responsible for espionage and counter-espionage under Mussolini. At one point in the interrogation, when the secretary who was recording the question was absent, Amé said to Robino: "...why don't you seek those responsible for the real and true bloody crimes committed by fascism? The Rosselli murders, for instance." Robino asked what Amé knew about the Rosselli assassinations, but the general

¹⁶⁵Father of the future PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer.

¹⁶⁶Mario Scoccimarro, of the PCI, had just recently been released from a long prison term. He was active in the armed Resistance and later served as vice-president of the Italian Senate.

¹⁶⁷Roy Domenico Palmer, *Italian Fascists On Trial, 1943-1948*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991, p. x.

replied, "I know nothing, but there is a certain Emanuele, I believe an official, who must know many things." "Are you trying to say," Robino asked, "that he participated...?". Amé responded with a sphinx-like "Perhaps." Later, he was to deny ever saying anything of the kind, and even denied being questioned.¹⁶⁸

Sante Emanuele was a retired colonel of the *carabinieri* (military police).

He testified before the High Court of Justice that

...while he was the head of the Third Section (counter-espionage) of the Servizio Informazioni Militari, Colonel Paolo Angioi, internal head of the service, in a daily report, gave him the order to eliminate Carlo Rosselli. He passed the order to the head of the counter-espionage center in Turin, Major Roberto Navale, and this last had undertaken direct contact with the French *cagouleurs*, who carried out the crime. The initiative came from the Foreign Minister, Galeazzo Ciano...¹⁶⁹

In sworn testimony in September 1944, Emanuele stated that he had met Ciano and Anfuso after the assassination of the Rosselli brothers and "...I can say specifically that the attitude of Ciano was such as to clearly show that the decision was his. The attitude of Anfuso was that of one who cooperated."¹⁷⁰ Filippo Anfuso was cabinet chief at the Foreign Ministry and as such, close to Ciano. Loyal to Mussolini after the *coup d'état* of 24-25 July 1943, he served in the Republic of Salò and was appointed ambassador to Berlin. Another high-ranking member of the fascist hierarchy to be implicated was General Mario Roatta,

¹⁶⁸The interrogation is recounted in Clara Conti, *Servizio segreto*, Rome: Donatello di Luigi, 1945, pp. 22-23. Conti was the secretary of Judge Italo Robino; the two were later married.

¹⁶⁹From the transcript of the High Court of Justice, 12 March 1945; quoted in Conti, pp. 31 and Salvemini, "L'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," p. 266.

¹⁷⁰Testimony of Santo Emanuele at the Roatta trial, quoted in Conti, pp. 257-69; and Salvemini, "L'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," pp. 267-69.

commander of the losing fascist side at the battle of Guadalajara and twice Chief of Staff of the Italian Army. Since 1934, he had been the head of the SIM and rumored to be involved in the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia. He was the highest ranking Italian military officer in Spain helping Franco, along with his German counterpart Admiral Wilhelm Canaris.¹⁷¹

The climax of Italian efforts to attain justice in the Rosselli affair was the trial held in Rome before the High Court of Justice for the Punishment of Fascist Crimes, from 29 January to 12 March 1945, better known as the "Roatta Trial."¹⁷² The accused were charged:

1) of the crime in which art. 3 of the decreto legge luogotenenziale 27 July 1944, n. 159 and 110, 112, n. 1 Codice penale, of having together and with the deceased fascist Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano during the years 1934 and following, with relevant acts contributing to maintaining fascism in power, participating in the organization and execution of hostile acts toward foreign states, such as to expose the Italian state to war, with activity that culminated in subjecting the information service and the Italian military to Germany, of espionage, denunciations and reprisals against antifascists, of shipwrecks, train wrecks, the arson of buildings, ships, and transports, of the diffusion of germs to provoke epidemics, of favoring of assassins and homicides among those that of Bonomini and the Rosselli brothers, Carlo and Nello, the last which were assassinated at Bagnoles

¹⁷¹*Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, pp. 20, 458-59.

¹⁷²The documents and transcripts of the trial have been published in *Il processo Roatta: i documenti*, Rome: Universale De Luigi, 1945. Those accused were: Fulvio Suvich, undersecretary for foreign affairs and ambassador to the U.S.A. in 1936, retired in 1938; Francesco Jacomini, vice-chief in the Cabinet of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Governor of Albania; Zenone Benini; Paolo Cortese; Alberto Pariani, an Army Chief of Staff; Filippo Anfuso; Mario Roatta; Paolo Angioi; Santo Emanuele; Roberto Navale; Vincenzo Bertolini; Manlio Petraghani; Efisio Ligas; Eugenio Piccardi; Domenico Formica. Suvich, Jacomini and Benini were not charged in the Rosselli assassination. Presiding Judge was Lorenzo Maroni, the prosecutor was Mario Berlinguer.

sur l'Orne (France) the 9th June 1937.¹⁷³

Emanuele was questioned by Judge Lorenzo Maroni on 31 January 1945:

Maroni: You have elaborated a vast program for the war in Spain. Acts of sabotage behind the "red" lines.¹⁷⁴

Emanuele: We had no other way to protect the soldiers in Spain except by sabotage...The orders of execution came to me from Angioi. Now I will speak of the Rosselli "affair". The elimination of Rosselli was certainly not an isolated fact, but must be inserted into the matrix of actions relative to the war in Spain. The Rosselli "affair" must be considered as an act of sabotage to eliminate the activity of Carlo Rosselli who was recruiting "red" troops. I transmitted this mission to the Turin center, directed by commandant Navale...It was this center that took care of all the details. Major Navale organized everything, independent from me.¹⁷⁵

Emanuele's testimony implied that Ciano and Anfuso decided on Rosselli's assassination without conferring with Mussolini. Although there exists no "smoking gun" evidence, it is highly unlikely that either Ciano or Anfuso would have undertaken such an action on their own.

On 22 March 1937, Navale met with members of the *cagoulard* in Monte Carlo. The French asked for 100 Beretta semi-automatic weapons in exchange for "the suppression of troublesome persons." Anfuso admitted to participating in this meeting with Navale and Emanuele.¹⁷⁶

The fascist dagger left behind by Jakubiez was used by the fascist papers

¹⁷³*Il processo Roatta: i documenti*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁷⁴Besides the traditional acts of sabotage, Emanuele revealed during the trial that the fascists had contemplated releasing deadly bacteria in Spain against the Loyalists--an early example of twentieth century germ warfare.

¹⁷⁵*Il processo Roatta: i documenti*, p. 26.

¹⁷⁶Anfuso's testimony is in Salvemini, "L'assassinio dei fratelli Rosselli," pp. 279-86.

to "prove" that it was an antifascist crime: fascists would not be so foolish to leave behind such evidence. Yet Vittorio Cerruti, former ambassador to Berlin and Paris, testified that when he met Ciano after the assassination, the Foreign Minister said to him: " 'You must admit that the idea of the dagger was really a brilliant idea'. I deduced that the dagger was placed there, by orders of Ciano, with the intention of accusing the antifascists of the assassination."¹⁷⁷

Before the sentences were handed down, Emilio Lussu, Aldo Garosci, Randolfo Pacciardi and Piero Calamandrei were permitted to address the court.¹⁷⁸ Calamandrei was the most impassioned and in the tradition of Italian judicial rhetoric concluded by addressing the accused:

... You sought to kill them, and have made them live forever; and it is they, these dead, that on the mud of this trial that Italy looks to, bringing a glimmer of dawn that shows the path of tomorrow. The Rossellis dead? Dead are you, on this bench, and the sinister shadows of the principals behind you. But Carlo and Nello (I wish that beyond the sea the mother, widows and children heard me), Carlo and Nello, the sweet, smiling friends, are here beside us, living and present, at the head of an infinite people of those who sacrificed themselves for freedom. They look about us at all these ruins, this void, this immensity of sorrow. But their faces are clear, their look is serene: they point to the future, and placing a hand on our shoulders, tell us: NON MOLLARE!¹⁷⁹

On 12 March sentence was passed on all the accused: Anfuso (*in absentia*) was found guilty and sentenced to death by firing squad; Roatta, Emanuele and Navale

¹⁷⁷*Il processo Roatta: i documenti*, p. 77.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 82-117. Calamandrei's speech before the court is only partially reprinted in *Il processo Roatta*; the entire speech was published as *Arringhe e discorsi: In memoria di Carlo e Nello Rosselli nel processo dinanzi l'Alta Corte contro Roatta e C.*, Naples: Rispoli, 1945 (Extract of the Review *Oratoria*, I, n. 2, September 1945).

¹⁷⁹Piero Calamandrei, *Arringhe e discorsi: In memoria di Carlo e Nello Rosselli*, p. 17.

were all found guilty and sentenced to life in prison; their sentences were to be published in all the daily papers of Rome. Angioi was sentenced to twenty years and six months; Pariani to fifteen years; Petraghiani to twelve years.¹⁸⁰ Only Roatta, Emanuele and Petraghiani were under arrest at the time and the court was to "lose" Roatta in the middle of the trial. Roatta, who had been complaining of ill health, was in the military hospital on Via Giulia in Rome. On the night of 4 March, he simply walked out of the hospital and disappeared. Although a half-hearted attempt was made to find the General, he easily made his way to Franco's Spain where he found a warm welcome. Several days later, on 7 March, the leftist parties organized a mass demonstration of 15,000 at the Coliseum; after marching up the Via dei Fori Imperiali, the crowd was fired upon by *carabinieri* "protecting" Prince Umberto at the Quirinale Palace.¹⁸¹ The travesty of justice continued when the Supreme Court of Cassation annulled the sentences of Navale, Angioi and Pariani. The Navale case was sent to the Court of Assizes of Rome, which recognized his guilt, but reduced the sentence to seven years. The Supreme Court of Cassation also annulled the sentences of those guilty in the death of Giuseppe Amendola. Another trial in Perugia in 1949 absolved Anfuso, Emanuele and Navale. In 1953 Anfuso was elected to Parliament as a deputy from the MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano--the neo-fascist party that arose after the second world war) and served as the editor of the party's newspaper, *Il Secolo d'Italia*.

¹⁸⁰*Il processo Roatta: i documenti*, p. 183.

¹⁸¹The Roatta trial, his escape and the demonstration are recounted in Roy Domenico Palmer, *Italian Fascists on Trial, 1943-1948*, pp. 134-139.

Roatta returned to Italy in the 1960s and died a free man in Rome in 1968.

Questions concerning the Rosselli assassinations surfaced again in 1951 with the publication of Alberto Moravia's *Il conformista*.¹⁸² Moravia, whose real last name was Pincherle, was a first cousin to the Rosselli brothers; his father Carlo was Amelia Pincherle Rosselli's brother. Interviewed by the noted critic Enzo Siciliano in 1972, one year after Bernardo Bertolucci had directed his cinematic version of *The Conformist*, Moravia stated that his novel was based on the Rosselli assassinations.¹⁸³ In 1990, Franco Bandini published *Il cono d'ombra* in which he argued that Rosselli was planning a major undertaking to expand the Spanish Civil War into Italy, thereby risking a general European-wide war. According to Bandini, Stalin was against any possible conflict with Nazi Germany or fascist Italy and ordered his N.K.V.D. to assist the *Cagoule* in assassinating the Rosselli brothers. As to the confessions of Navale and Emanuele, Bandini makes the preposterous claim, based only on speculation, that they were both double-agents working for the N.K.V.D.!¹⁸⁴

¹⁸²Alberto Moravia, *Il conformista*, Milan: Bompiani, 1951; in English, *The Conformist*, trans. Angus Davidson, New York: Playboy Paperbacks, 1982.

¹⁸³Enzo Siciliano, *Moravia*, Milan: Longanesi, 1971. For an analysis of Bertolucci's film, cfr. Angela Dalle Vacche, *The Body in the Mirror: Shapes of History in Italian Cinema*, Princeton: Princeton University press, 1992, pp. 57-92; Peter Bondanella, *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present*, New York: Frederick Ungar, 1983, 301-306; Millicent Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, Princeton: Princeton University press, 1986, pp. 285-312.

¹⁸⁴Bandini, *Il cono d'ombra: chi armò la mano degli assassini dei fratelli Rosselli*, p. 438.

The Rosselli brothers, representing two different types of resistance to fascism, were thus inducted into that pantheon of martyrs to fascism: Piero Gobetti, Giovanni Amendola, Giacomo Matteotti, Antonio Gramsci and others who had refused to consider any moral compromise with the regime.

CONCLUSION

Men reject their prophets and slay them, but they love their martyrs and honor those whom they have slain.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky
The Brothers Karamazov (1880)

The assassination of the Rosselli brothers was a devastating blow to Giustizia e Libertà and European antifascism. Nello had been widely respected for his courageous insistence on remaining in Italy to continue his scholarly work and Carlo was almost universally recognized for his boundless energy and selfless dedication to the struggle. Even his bitterest ideological critics were quick to acknowledge that European antifascism had lost one of its best. Palmiro Togliatti, so vocal in his condemnation of Giustizia e Libertà in the 1930s, wrote that Rosselli represented a figure of "civic courage and devotion to the cause of freedom" that was seldom to be found in the bourgeoisie. Togliatti recognized the profound conflict between Giustizia e Libertà and the PCd'I, refusing to "throw

a hypocritical veil over our differences," yet insisted that "our dissent was admissible in the framework of democratic antifascism."¹

Rosselli's movement continued to work against fascism and publish *Giustizia e Libertà* until the fall of France in June 1940. Yet the various ideological tensions that had given the movement a dynamism while Rosselli was alive now worked to hinder its effectiveness. Alberto Tarchiani, who represented the liberal wing, had resigned from his position on the Executive Committee when it became clear that Rosselli was moving further to the Left in the context of the Ethiopian War. After Rosselli's death, he left the movement.²

Emilio Lussu had also distanced himself from *Giustizia e Libertà* in 1935, arguing--contrary to Tarchiani--that the movement was not radical enough and should reformulate itself as the new revolutionary socialist party. Contrary to Tarchiani though, he returned to *Giustizia e Libertà* after Rosselli's death and attempted to forge an alliance of Republicans, Socialists and Communists to infuse the movement with a democratic, revolutionary idealism. He served as minister in the government of Ferruccio Parri and, until his death in 1975, continued to insist that the PSI should not cooperate with the Christian Democrats.³

¹Palmiro Togliatti, "La lotta per la pace e per la libertà è degna di tutti sacrifici," in *Lo Stato Operaio*, XI, nn. 5-6, May-June 1937, pp. 298-306. The same issue commemorated the death of Antonio Gramsci.

²Tarchiani fled Europe in the face of the Nazi invasion and arrived in New York where he was instrumental in forming the Mazzini Society. As secretary of the Society, he edited its newspaper, and actively participated in the Resistance. After the war, he served as Italian ambassador to the United States (1945-1955).

³Emilio Lussu, *Sul Partito d'Azione e gli altri*, Milan: Mursia, 1968.

Aldo Garosci also fled from the Nazi invasion of France and arrived in the United States where he worked with Gaetano Salvemini in editing the *Quaderni Italiani*, published in New York and continuing the work of the *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*. It was during his American exile that he wrote the two-volume biography of Carlo Rosselli. After the war, he was appointed to the chair of modern history at the University of Turin and became one of the most prolific and persistent defenders of the exiled resistance.⁴

The Rosselli families spent the next decade in exile. In 1940, the same year that Marshall Pétain pardoned those responsible for the assassinations, they made their way to the United States and settled in Larchmont, NY. Marion, "Mirtillino," Melina and a third child, Andrea, were joined by Maria (Nello's widow) and her four children. They were all shepherded by the indomitable Amelia, now in her mid-seventies, but still fiercely proud of her sons. In 1946, they returned to Italy where Marion died in 1949 and Amelia in 1954.⁵ "Mirtillino" returned to the United States and was trained as an historian. He eventually settled in England, and was professor of history at the University of Sussex.⁶

⁴Aldo Garosci granted this author an interview at his home in Rome, 23 July 1993.

⁵Gaetano Salvemini, "Marion Rosselli," in *Il Ponte*, VI, n. 5, May 1951, p. 1443; Corrado Tumiatì, "Amelia Rosselli, scrittrice," in *Il Ponte* XII, n. 4, April 1956, pp. 576-86.

⁶John Rosselli was interviewed by the author in San Rocco a Pili, near Siena on 2 July 1993. His works include *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a Profession*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; *Music and Musicians in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, London: B. T. Batsford, 1991; *The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi: The Role of the Impresario*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984; *Lord William Bentinck: The Making of a Liberal Imperialist*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974; *Lord William Bentinck and the British Occupation of Sicily*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1956.

Giustizia e Libertà managed to weather the loss of Carlo Rosselli, although it never was the same. In May 1940, with the fall of France imminent, it drafted a manifesto against fascism, reiterating many of the proposals first brought forth by Carlo Rosselli. As the fascist regime began to crumble under the onslaught of war, many members of Giustizia e Libertà made their way back into Italy, where they reorganized themselves in January of 1943 as the Partito d'Azione. From Milan, they published *L'Italia Libera* which outlined a formal political program based on regional autonomy, agrarian and industrial reform, progressive taxation, mass education, and the development of the *Mezzogiorno*. Italy was to be a secular, republican state within a European federation.⁷

Even though it was a formal political party, the Partito d'Azione remained true to Rosselli's vision of the movement. In many ways it was the most radical of the parties involved in the Committee of National Liberation--the political arm of the Italian Resistance.⁸ When Togliatti returned from Moscow in 1944, he announced the *svolta* (turn) of the PCI--its willingness to collaborate with the Badoglio government and postpone questions of the monarchy and the Vatican Accords. The Partito d'Azione, instead, was the most intransigent party in demanding the abdication of Victor Emanuele III, the declaration of the republic and the complete separation of Church and State. Parallel to the political activity

⁷Giovanni De Luna, *Storia del Partito d'Azione*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1982.

⁸The CLN was composed of five parties: the Liberals, the Social Democrats, the PSI, the PCI and the Partito d'Azione. Cfr. Franco Catalano, *Storia del comitato di liberazione nazionale alta italia*, Milan: Bompiani, 1956.

of the Partito d'Azione was its military contribution to the Resistance. Brigades were formed--the "Rosselli," the "GL" and the "Italia Libera"--which were second only to the communists in their strength and importance. Members of the Partito d'Azione were to play a significant role in the immediate post-war landscape. Known as "the party of the intellectuals," its fatal flaw was an inability to capture a mass base.⁹

Even before the fighting was over, a struggle took place over how to define the post-war order and the nature of the antifascist resistance. In a radio broadcast on 1 September 1944, Pope Pius XII offered a religious justification of private property, while Alcide De Gasperi would write that "antifascism is a contingent political phenomenon, which will at a certain moment be overturned by other political ideals more in keeping with the...feelings of Italian public life, for the good and the progress of the nation."¹⁰

The potential and problems of the Partito d'Azione were embodied in Ferruccio Parri, who became the first prime minister of post-war Italy. Parri, who had been imprisoned with Rosselli, symbolized the spirit and idealism of the antifascist Resistance. He also revealed that idealism was no match for the political cunning of the Christian Democrats under De Gasperi. Appointed prime minister by the CLN on 19 June 1945, his program of institutional reform was

⁹On the history of the Partito d'Azione, see Giovanni De Luna, *Storia del Partito d'Azione*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1982 and John L. Hirsh, "Radical Anti-Fascism: Origins and Politics of the Italian Action Party," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1965.

¹⁰Quoted in Giorgio Bocca, *Storia dell'Italia partigiana*, Bari: Laterza, 1970, p. 402.

sabotaged by the Christian Democrats in alliance with the British¹¹ and, to a lesser extent, the Americans. By the end of 1945, Parri's attempt to institute a purge of former fascists was undermined by both the Liberal and Christian Democratic parties. When the Liberal Party, with the support of the Christian Democrats, withdrew from the governing coalition on 24 November, the Parri government collapsed and he was forced to resign. After the 1946 elections--in which they won only 1.5 percent of the vote and seven seats--the party was officially disbanded. The members made their way to the various parties of the Left; some finding their way to the PCI, some to the PSI and many to the small but highly respected and influential PRI.

In September of 1944 members of the Circolo di Cultura which had been devastated by the fascists on New Years' Eve 1924 gathered in Florence. They formed the Circolo di Cultura Politica "Fratelli Rosselli" which still exists today in the Piazza della Libertà.¹²

Carlo and Nello Rosselli were brought back to Florence from the Père Lachaise cemetery in April 1951. Their bodies lay in state in the magnificent Sala dei Duecento of the Palazzo Vecchio. On 29 April, solemn ceremonies took place in the Piazza della Signoria. Salvemini, who had returned from his American exile

¹¹Winston Churchill was obsessed with preventing any left-leaning government from coming to power in Italy. He applied all the political clout available to save the House of Savoy. In December 1944, representatives of the Resistance met the Allies in Rome; there, the so-called "Protocols of Rome" were signed, which symbolized, in the words of Sandro Pertini, "the subjection of the Resistance to British policy." Cfr. Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943-1988*, London: Penguin, 1990, pp. 57-58.

¹²Vincenzo Caciulli, "Nel nome dei Rosselli. La rinascita del Circolo di Cultura e i primi anni di attività," in *Quaderni del Circolo Rosselli* XI, n. 1, January 1991, pp. 61-73.

to his teaching post at the University of Florence, spoke of their heroic sacrifice before the brothers were interred at the cemetery of Trespiano, overlooking their beloved city--the "Athens of Italy."¹³

Although Giustizia e Libertà and the Partito d'Azione did not survive into the post-war era, their ideals were kept alive by many independent intellectuals of the Left. Parri and Pertini continued to play an important role in the political life of Italy; the latter became president of the Republic in 1978. It was, as many would agree, "an extraordinarily felicitous choice:"

The tiny and frail old man invigorated the office of the President. His outspoken advocacy of democratic values, his constant re-evocation of his anti-Fascist youth, his invitation every year to thousands of schoolchildren to come and meet him in the Quirinale, left an indelible impression on Italian public opinion. Pertini became the most popular President that the Republic ever had. Thirty-five years after the Parri government, the Resistance returned memorably to the highest echelons of the State. As a consequence, Italian democracy was much strengthened.¹⁴

It was no coincidence that Pertini called the Republican Giovanni Spadolini to become Prime Minister in 1981. For the first time in the history of republican Italy, the prime minister was not a Christian Democrat. Spadolini was one of the Italian political leaders who clearly associated themselves with the legacy of

¹³The single stone that marks both graves is marked by a flaming torch, the symbol of GL and states simply: "Carlo e Nello Rosselli/Giustizia e Libertà/Per Questo Morirono/Per Questo Vivono." Salvemini's speech was reprinted as "Carlo e Nello Rosselli," in *Il Ponte* VI, n. 5, May 1951, pp. 451-61 and in *Tornano i Rosselli*: Florence: Circolo di Cultura Politica "Fratelli Rosselli," 1951, pp. 7-17. The graves of the Rosselli brothers are flanked by those of Nello Traquandi, Ernesto Rossi and Gaetano Salvemini who died in 1957.

¹⁴Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, p. 418.

Giustizia e Libertà and the Partito d'Azione.¹⁵

What does Rosselli represent in the aftermath of the Cold War and the collapse of the First Italian Republic in the wake of the corruption scandals? Costanzo Casucci, who edited the two volumes of the *Scritti dell'esilio* has said that Rosselli is a paradoxical figure: "molto famoso ma poco conosciuto" ("very famous but little known"), and should be considered "the Mazzini of the twentieth century."¹⁶ Claudio Pavone thinks that Rosselli "aspired to be the critical conscience of communism," but that his "nobility" was overwhelmed by Togliatti's "pragmatism."¹⁷ One American historian has written that Rosselli was "a prophet of the Italian Republic," while Michael Walzer has said that Rosselli was "the Italian Camus."¹⁸

Arguably, Rosselli was all of these. Yet the concept of the tragic hero is especially apt in understanding his life and death. From the moment that he took up the antifascist struggle, Rosselli seemed to prefigure his own death. In his writings on Matteotti, Gobetti, Amendola and Gramsci and in his essays from the Spanish Civil War, the images of sacrifice and death are ever-present. It appears

¹⁵Giovanni Spadolini was also a highly respected intellectual and historian until his death in 1994. Among his many scholarly works, see his *Carlo e Nello Rosselli: le radici mazziniane del loro pensiero*, Florence: Passigli, 1990. See the essay by Leo Valiani (another member of GL) on Spadolini's death, "L'eredità del Risorgimento," in *Corriere della Sera*, 5 August 1994, p. 1.

¹⁶Interview with the author in Rome, 23 June 1993.

¹⁷Claudio Pavone interviewed in *La Stampa*, 29 May 1993, p. 17.

¹⁸Massimo Mangili-Climpson, *Men of Heart of Red, White and Green: Italian Anti-Fascist Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, p. 131; Walzer's comment was at the presentation of the English translation of *Liberal Socialism* on its publication, 13 October 1994 at the Italian Cultural Institute, New York.

that he was acutely aware of how his life would end.

As Aristotle demanded, Rosselli's tragedy was characterized by reversal, the magnitude of the plot, the nobility of the hero and inspires both pity and fear. But whereas for Aristotle tragedy existed only in art, Rosselli embodied the concept in life. As in Hegel, the tragic hero is identical with the finite force that he represents and his tragic flaw lies precisely in this identification. As in Nietzsche, the tragedy is, ultimately, an affirmation of life in the synthesis of the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

With his intransigent resistance against fascism; with his refusal to bow before the barbarity of an age; with his heresies and exile, Rosselli personified the essence of the twentieth-century intellectual who reflects the essential conflicts of our age and the human condition.

Appendix A

Carlo Rosselli Writings 1917-1937

- "Il nostro programma," in *Noi Giovani* (I), n. 1, January 1917.
- "Mangiamo meno," in *Noi Giovani* (I), n. 1, January 1917.
- "Libera Russia," in *Noi Giovani* (I), n. 4, April 1917.
- "Wilson," in *Noi Giovani*, (I), n. 5, May 1917.
- "Compito nuovo," in *Vita*, (VIII), 20 May 1919.
- "Il sindacalismo," thesis defended in July 1921 at the Istituto "Cesare Alfieri" Florence, now in AGL, Florence.
- "Lineamenti della crisi sociale" (review), in *Critica sociale* (XXXI), 15-30 December 1921.
- "La lotta di classe nel movimento operaio" (review), in *Critica sociale* (XXXII), 1-15 February 1923.
- "Per la storia della logica," in *La Rivoluzione liberale* (II), 15 March 1923.
- "Contraddizioni liberiste," in *La Rivoluzione liberale* (II), 24 April 1923.
- "Liberalismo socialista," in *Critica sociale* (XXXIII), 1-15 July 1923.
- "Per una teoria economica di sindacalismo," thesis defended in July 1923 at the University of Siena.
- "La crisi intellettuale del Partito Socialista," in *Critica sociale* (XXXIII), 1-15 November 1923.
- "Aggiunte e chiose al 'bilancio marxista'," in *Critica sociale* (XXXIII), 1-15 December 1923.
- "Il Partito del Lavoro in Inghilterra," in *Libertà* (I), 1 February 1924.

- "Il movimento operaio," in *La Rivoluzione liberale* (III), 25 March-1 April 1924.
- "Inchiesta sulla guerra," in *Libertà* (I), 10 May 1924.
- "Luigi Einaudi e il movimento operaio," in *Critica sociale* (XXXIV), 15-31 May 1924.
- "Liberalismo socialista," in *La Rivoluzione liberale* (III), 15 July 1924.
- "The third winter of unemployment," in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXI), January-February 1924.
- "Financial Policy of Czecho-Slovakia during the first year of its History," in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXI), January-February 1924.
- "Control of Credit as a remedy for Unemployment," in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXI), July-August 1924.
- "Scienza economica e leghe operaie," in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXI), May-June 1924.
- "Monopolio e unità sindacale," in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXI), September-October 1924.
- "Politica economica internazionale inglese prima di Adam Smith," in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXI), September-October 1924.
- "Keynes sulla riforma monetaria," in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXI), November-December 1924.
- "Francesco Ferrara nella scienza e nella politica economica," in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXII), March-April 1925.
- "Commemorazione nell'azione," in *Libertà* (II), 10 June 1925.
- "Miti liberistici o miti sindacali?," in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXII), September-October 1925.
- "Le memorie di Henry Ford" (review), in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXII), September-October 1925.
- "L'azione sindacale e i suoi limiti," in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXII), November-December 1925.

"Rivalutazione e stabilizzazione della lira," in *La Riforma sociale* (XXXIII), March-April 1926.

"Le battaglie operaie del Piemonte nel libro di un anarchico conservatore," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 27 March 1925.

"Il socialismo ha sofferto troppo poco," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 27 March 1926.

"Autocritica," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 3 April 1926.

"Amendola," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 10 April 1926.

"Il problema monetaria," I, in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 24 April 1926.

"Autocritica, non demolizione," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 1 May 1926.

"Battaglia storica," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 8 May 1926.

"Il problema monetaria," II, in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 22 May 1926.

"Volontarismo," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 12 June 1926.

"Pacate riflessioni sulla riforma sindacale," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 19 June 1926.

"Contro il pessimismo," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 26 June 1926.

"Mazzini o Cattaneo," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 3 July 1926.

"La Questione Meridionale," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 18 September 1926.

"Anna Kuliscioff," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 18 September 1926.

"Lettera a Avanti!," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 2 October 1926.

"Il liberismo di Giretti," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 2 October 1926.

"Un congresso e i suoi problemi," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 9 October 1926.

"Il nostro liberismo," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 16 October 1926.

"Il congresso del PSli," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 30 October 1926.

"Mazzini," in *Il Quarto Stato* (I), 30 October 1926.

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Appendix B

Newspapers and Journals in the Reading Room of the "Circolo di Cultura"¹

Italian Dailies

1. <i>Corriere della Sera</i>	7. <i>Il Mondo</i>
2. <i>Il Popolo d'Italia</i>	8. <i>Il Popolo</i>
3. <i>Il Nuovo Paese</i>	9. <i>La voce repubblicana</i>
4. <i>L'Idea Nazionale</i>	10. <i>La Giustizia</i>
5. <i>Il Corriere Italiano</i>	11. <i>L'Avanti!</i>
6. <i>La Stampa</i>	12. <i>Il Lavoro</i>

Foreign Dailies

1. <i>Les Temps</i>	5. <i>Deutsche Allgemeinebeitung</i>
2. <i>L'Oeuvre</i>	6. <i>Vorwart</i>
3. <i>L'Era Nouvelle</i>	7. <i>The Chicago Tribune</i>
4. <i>The Times</i>	8. <i>La Nation</i>

Political Reviews

1. <i>Critica sociale</i>	5. <i>La Nuova politica Liberale</i>
2. <i>La civilita' cattolica</i>	6. <i>Studi politici</i>
3. <i>Critica politica</i>	7. <i>Gerarchia</i>
4. <i>Politica</i>	8. <i>Rivoluzione liberale</i>
9. <i>L'Europe Nouvelle</i>	16. <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i>
10. <i>La Revue de Geneve</i>	17. <i>The Manchester Guardian</i>
11. <i>The Round Table</i>	18. <i>The Observer</i>
12. <i>Saturday Review</i>	19. <i>Truth</i>
13. <i>The Fortnight Review</i>	20. <i>The New Statesman</i>
14. <i>The Contemporary Review</i>	21. <i>The Nation</i>
15. <i>The Nineteenth Century</i>	22. <i>The Spectator</i>

Economic and Sociology Reviews

1. <i>Giornali degli economisti</i>	8. <i>Bolletino dell'emigrazione</i>
2. <i>La riforma sociale</i>	9. <i>Bolletino di informazioni agrarie</i>
3. <i>L'economista</i>	10. <i>Annali del Ministero per l'agricoltura</i>

¹The original list is reproduced in *Quaderni del Circolo Rosselli*, "Nel nome dei Rosselli, 1920-1990," XI, n. 1, January 1991, p.30.

4. *Problemi italiani*
5. *Bolletino di notizie economiche*
6. *Rivista internazionale delle Istituzioni economiche e sociale*
7. *Bolletino di notizie commerciale*

11. *Rivista Sociologia Hallesista*
12. *Revue d'Economie Politique*
13. *L'Economiste*
14. *Revue Internationale Sociologie*
15. *Financial Times*

Labor Questions

1. *Battaglie sindacali*
2. *Il Lavoro d'Italia*
3. *Il Domani sociale*
4. *Sindacalismo*
5. *Problemi del lavoro sociale*
6. *La Cooperazione Italiana*

7. *Informazioni sociali*
8. *Revue Internationale du Travail*
9. *La disoccupazione in Italia*
10. *Emigrazione e Lavoro*
11. *Bolletino del Lavoro e della Previdenza*

Various

1. *L'Italia che scrive*
2. *I libri del giorno*
3. *La parola e il libro*
4. *Conferenze e prolusioni*
5. *Minerva*
6. *La Critica*
7. *Giornale Critico Filosofia*
8. *Rivista di filosofia*
9. *Rivista pedagogica*
10. *Nuova rivista storica*
11. *L'educazione nazionale*

12. *La nostra scuola*
13. *L'Istruzione media*
14. *The Times Educational Supplement*
15. *Bilychmis*
16. *Revue Mensuelle de literature*
17. *Nouvelle Revue Francais*
18. *The Times Literary Supplement*
19. *Rassegna di studi sessuali*
20. *Christian Science Monitor*
21. *Scientia*
22. *Rivista di diritto agrario*

Appendix C

Letter to Presiding Judge²

18-9-27

Your Honor,

In the only interrogation that I underwent, I said and confirm that it was for political reasons and not affection or solidarity of party, that convinced me to plan and organize the evasion of Filippo Turati from Italian imprisonment. I now consent, in the interest of my defense and your inquiry, to clarify my position. In the name of justice that pursues a non-existent network of complicity--and still detains persons absolutely extraneous from the crime--it must not be kept silent that the first and only responsible entity that the consciences of free men incriminates, is fascism. Fascism, which has suppressed with blind violence and struck with inequitable laws every possibility of legal opposition; which in the name of a Country usurped for the advantage of a faction and social solidarity that it has lacerated, has razed to the ground the edifice of the work of thirty years of sacrifices on the part of the Italian workers; that with the law of the club, instrument of its fortune and nemesis, has nailed into servitude millions of citizens, throwing them into the tragic alternative of supine acquiescence or hunger and exile. It, and no other, is the author of that *fuoruscitismo* which it accuses of the injured Patria.

With the very foundations, the most intimate of the moral life of the Nation overthrown, after the reprisals of November, the leaders of the opposition had only one gesture left to fulfill: emigrate. So that the world would hear, through the torment, the indignity, the rebellion of the exiles, the historic value of a battle in defense of the spirit of European civilization.

It is a battle which must force the Italians--whose tradition of weakness and servility hangs over them--in their apprenticeship of a modern nation, educating them to appreciate those supreme social values that a people knows how to defend when it has paid the price of its conquest: the principle of the autonomy of the citizen and of classes, morality in public life, a hatred for every tyranny and demagoguery, freedom of development that is competition not a brawl, justice as a stimulus and supreme goal for individuals and classes.

The struggle today is desperate, because it is not understood by the many and fought against a minority armed with all the power of a ferociously concentrated State; a beautiful struggle for the best men, who cannot betray a

²Original in BNF, FR, cassetta 1, inserto II, n. 4. Reprinted in *Il processo di Savona*, ed. Vico Faggi, Genoa: Teatro Stabile, 1965, pp. 158-160.

cause made sacred by the blood of Matteotti and Amendola.

You help the certainty of the victory that they entrust to the youth of tomorrow. It was for this faith, Your Honor, and with this understanding, that I have voluntarily violated the fascist law, happy to have contributed in demonstrating the absurdity, and therefore the impotence of all the excesses of despotism.

For me and my companion, Filippo Turati abroad meant an austere protest--given solemn value by forty years of life to the service of the Nation and Humanity--against the fascist regime. It wanted to be, and in fact was, a cry of alarm to the civilized world, it wanted to offer living proof of the definitive rupture between two Italies, between two moral races, between two opposing conceptions of life; it wanted to signify for the opposition the beginning of a process of selection and liberation from ancient blows and recent errors. In this great seventy-year-old man, proud with a moral coherence and duty that cannot be obscured by inevitable mistakes, forced, as other great Italians in the time of tyranny, to flee the country because a life worthy of the name is no longer possible, Europe will find the demonstration of the desolation in which fascism has reduced Italy.

Now there comes, in the wake of the successful crime, fascist repression. It will give these ideas a vast resonance, helping them in their rebirth.

A socialist, I came to socialism after the defeat, in the conviction that the redemption of the workers must be based on an unshakable moral foundation and to take back, integrating, the tradition of a *Risorgimento* that has remained the patrimony of a few, I feel today with a sure conscience that my modest action recalls, by the spirit that informed it, those great combatants for Italian independence.

It is a comfort and a confirmation to me to think that this continuity that I claim between the struggle of today and that of yesterday, finds a characteristic echo in the history of my family. A Rosselli clandestinely welcomed a dying Mazzini, exile in his own country. It was logical that another Rosselli, half a century later, managed to save from fascist fury one of the most noble and disinterested spirits of the Country.

Carlo Rosselli

Appendix D

DRAFT OF A PROGRAM³

Fascism cannot be defeated except by a revolutionary movement that decisively imposes and resolves, by the use of freedom, the fundamental political and social problems of Italian life.

Giustizia e Libertà, by its constitution and the substance of its program, is the concrete expression of the forces that struggle on the revolutionary terrain against fascism.

Politically, Giustizia e Libertà looks to the conquest of freedom, of a republican State that realizes the forms of the widest possible democracy, based essentially on the working classes and their autonomous organizations; socially, Giustizia e Libertà wants to affirm a principle of justice that renders that democracy effective, radically facing the problem of land and industry and that of internal factory relations.

The antifascist revolution will not be a simple change of superficial political forms, nor a return to the past, but a profound economic-political transformation. The Government and the local revolutionary Councils that arises from the revolution will have the task of laying the foundation for the new State.

A Constituent Assembly, elected by universal suffrage and quickly convoked, will consecrate the work of the revolution and will establish the definite structure of the Republic.

The Foundation of the New Regime

The monarchy will be declared overthrown and the Republic will be proclaimed.

Freedom of association, professional organization, of the press, of emigration, etc. will be re-established.

Suppression of the fascist militia and police, a republican guard will be constituted for the defense of the Revolution.

The leading figures, backers, financiers and profiteers of fascism, beginning with the king, will be tried; the possessions of those condemned will be confiscated and will form a fund to indemnify political victims.

Fascist newspapers will be confiscated and put at the disposal of the revolutionary committees.

³"Schema di Programma," in *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*, n. 1 January 1932, pp. 4-8.

The fascist corporations and trade unions will be dissolved.

Agrarian Reform

The antifascist revolution will confront the agrarian problem based on the principle: "Land to those who work it," while at the same time defending the interests of production.

Those businesses in which it will be possible to immediately confer property to the workers without harmful consequences will be identified, from those that require many workers, from vast capital and superior technical direction in which the fragmentation would disorganize and reduce productivity. Consequently:

a) Sharecroppers, small tenants, leasers and in general all those who cultivate the land with their personal labor or with their family, will acquire the land they cultivate, with a moderate indemnity paid to the old proprietors to be paid by the State, which will represent the legitimate title of acquisition and, in case of the confiscation of the property, will go to the State. There will be established a maximum quota for the indemnity. Where it is requested by those involved in production, Consortia or Cooperatives will be established for the management of common services, under the direction or control of technicians.

b) Those agrarian firms where the individual attribution of the land would be anti-economical will become communal and indivisible property of the cultivators, except for the old proprietor and the amount of capital invested, who will have the right to indemnity, as in the preceding paragraph. The new firms will be managed as a cooperative or other collective form according to the local economic requirements.

c) Those workers who have not found permanent employment as proprietors or co-proprietors of personal or collective agricultural firms, will have the right to preference in the assignment of public and reclaimed lands.

d) The State will organize agrarian credit in a way to assure the success of agrarian reform.

Special measures will regulate mortgage debts.

Industry and Banking

The antifascist revolution will confront the problem of the industrial crisis, which is not solely economic, but of men and classes. It cannot be resolved except by a general re-organization of industry and the transformation of internal relations within the factory.

A permanent organ for the direction and control of national economic life will trace a plan of economic reconstruction and will establish, in accord with public powers, the fundamental directives of production.

The reform of industry will be based on the socialization with autonomous management, on workers' control and factory democracy, to be applied by the following criteria:

The industries and firms that are essential public services (hydroelectric,

fertilizers, large private credit banks) or that profit by a natural monopoly (mining), or that have until now survived by extorting from the collective enormous protective tariffs or subsidies (iron-and-steel, sugar, naval construction) will be socialized.

The management of the socialized firms will not be assumed by the State, but by autonomous agencies, not bureaucratic, directed by technicians with the participation of workers' representatives, of consumers and interested public entities. The capital stock of the socialized industries, except for those confiscated from those responsible for fascism, will be transformed by title of a moderate indemnity, to be extinguished in a generation.

To avoid, in the transition period, the upheaval of production in the socialized industries and great unemployment that would follow, technicians will be required to preserve their positions, except for the following revision.

Workers' control, introduced in all the large and medium firms, public as well as private, must insure to the working classes an effective participation in the management of the firms. It will be organized in such a way as to affirm workers' freedom in the factory, to develop the industrial capacity of the working class, and to oppose, in the interest of production, the tendencies toward bureaucratization and centralization.

Union and Cooperative Policy

The properties of the fascist party and organizations will be confiscated to be transferred to worker and peasant organizations.

All collective contracts will be reviewed.

Unemployment indemnity must be sufficient for life and paid during the entire period of unemployment to all unemployed.

An organization for the defense and interests of domestic workers will be passed. with a minimum wage and formal contracts.

The cooperative movement will receive, in all its branches, the maximum support. Ties between industrial and agrarian cooperatives and consumer cooperatives, reorganizing the markets with the suppression of parasitical intermediaries.

Financial and Customs Policy

Registration of titles will be introduced and the inheritance tax will be re-established with progressive rates.

Radical provisions will be taken to abolish the grain tax and the taxes on popular consumer goods.

Customs tariffs will be reviewed with the goal of a general progressive reduction.

Housing Policy

Immediate reduction of rents. Municipalization of land and building construction. Political reform which favors the transfer of actual property to the

Municipality or the tenants against the payment of a moderate indemnity.

Foreign and Colonial Policy-Ethnic Minorities

The Italian Republic will carry out a decisive policy of peace and disarmament; it will greatly reduce military and colonial spending; it will advocate a united organization of Europe and a policy of free trade. It will recognize the cultural and administrative autonomy of ethnic minorities. It will adopt a policy of understanding and freedom toward the inhabitant of the colonies.

Judicial and Prison Reform

Independence and tenure of judges, ...
Radical reform of the prison system.

Education Policy

Free education, open to all grades to the people and adhering to the renewed forms of social life. Teaching and culture will receive the maximum impulse and will be considered as essential to the life and progress of the Republic.

Ecclesiastical Policy

Complete separation of Church and State, confiscation of the goods of the high clergy and religious Congregations. Unconditional freedom of conscience and worship.

The Treaty of Conciliation, the Financial Convention, and the Concordat will be declared null. Bond titles (1 billion) consigned to the Vatican will be invalidated.

Autonomy

The organization of the new State must base itself on the largest autonomy. The functions of the central government must limit themselves only to those matters that concern national life.

The principle of autonomy is one of the principal directives of the revolutionary movement *Giustizia e Libertà*.

Appendix E

Against the Fascist War! For the Liberating Revolution!⁴

Fascism is above all an instrument of war: it was born from domestic, fratricidal warfare; it always proclaimed foreign war for "imperial" conquest as the supreme end. As long as fascism was identified only with the delirious rhetoric of Mussolini, the threat of an armed conflict was still remote.

But today the reactionary and devastating folly has invaded and crushed Germany, one of the most frightening forces in the world. The specter of a new and fearful conflagration advances with great strides, threatening the last remaining democracies in Europe.

We know very well that these democracies are not perfect and can be considered partially responsible for the errors of the post war period and the present situation. But it must be acknowledged that today these democracies do not pursue a policy of war in which they would have everything to lose. They are also the only countries in which the working classes preserve the right to life and the possibility of acting against the machinations of war. Therefore, for Italian antifascism it is not a question of siding with one group or another; but to continue and intensify to the maximum revolutionary activity. It is a categorical certainty that the systematic provocation, the conscious and feverish aggressive preparation, are privileges of various fascisms, from that in black shirts to that of the swastika.

In the atmosphere of nearing catastrophe that suffocates Europe, Giustizia e Libertà cannot and should not limit itself to an inert political or historical critique, to an abstract dispute on the reasons and the mistakes of the contestants.

Instead a precise duty to act resolutely imposes itself, to draw from the circumstances as they are, the maximum contribution to the reaching of our goal: a free and republican Italy, an Italy of Labor.

No doubts therefore, no hesitation; no petty scruples and no obtuse, nationalistic calculation, however disguised. Democratic antifascism which is upon the terrain of the revolutionary struggle for the conquest of

⁴AGL, sezione IV, fascicolo 3, sottofascicolo 8.

freedom and for the demolition of all the political and social remnants of tyranny, must without doubt prepare itself, spiritually and materially, for the eventuality of a war. Until recently, it was possible to doubt; today, after Hitler's victory, and notwithstanding all the pacifist feigning and the movements for disarmament of others, Mussolini still hopes to find a way out of a general conflict. He has sown rifles, cannons, threats and words of hate: he cannot gather and distribute olive branches. He is dragged, by the same gears of his domestic and foreign policy, to drive Italy into a frightful adventure.

Giustizia e Libertà sides against the war and makes an appeal to the working classes and to the Italians--in Italy and abroad--that they refuse to admit that the interests of the nation are identifiable with that of a lunatic dictatorship, a perjured and dishonored dynasty, unscrupulous bands and praetorian militia. Antifascist revolutionary democracy proclaims its right to revolution in every circumstance and especially in the tragic occasion of a conflict. Decisive will, all our capacities and all our forces must be directed in transforming the fascist war into a civil war of liberation. The *patria* is in the homes, the fields, the workshops, free labor, in the thought and the works of Italians, not on the points of the bayonets of our oppressors. The enemy is within, and not beyond, the borders.

The fascist war will be, in spirit if not in fact, a second "march on Rome"; it will devastate and massacre Europe to restore feudalism in Germany, restore the Habsburg monarchy in Austria-Hungary, consolidate in Italy, and impose here and there throughout the world a regime of capitalistic brigandage and political tyrannies. The Italians will have to spill their blood to clinch their chains.

Nor must credence be given, either domestically or abroad, to the usual fraud of a defensive war: whatever war Mussolini drags Italy into is an offensive, premeditated war, provoked by fascism.

Giustizia e Libertà will ruthlessly work against that war. We will not remain impassive, with our arms folded, to wait for the manna of freedom to rain from the heavens: we will intervene energetically, so that the fascist war will be sabotaged in every possible way and with every available means.

Giustizia e Libertà, the revolutionary avant-garde of Italian democratic antifascism affirms that we must prepare to fight on two fronts:

abroad, calling the Italian emigration to rebel against mobilization and to be ready for an antifascist intervention in Italy at the opportune time;

domestically, sabotaging propaganda, mobilization, the operations of war, and unfolding an intense activity among officials, soldiers, workers, peasants, so that the fascist war will irresistibly bloom into a democratic revolution.

The territorial integrity of Italy and the peaceful expansion of every

civil initiative are not threatened by anyone. We can serenely fight against the fascist war, without fear that the second *Risorgimento* can be the fruit of provincial barter or privileges.

Conscious, therefore, of the responsibility that we assume before the country and the world, we are ready, more than ever, to throw ourselves against the fascist barbarities; and we will consider our lives well spent if our sacrifice will contribute in giving Italy political freedom and social justice, and if it becomes the avant-garde of the democratic, socialist and republican reconstruction of Europe.

The Central Committee of
Giustizia e Libertà

Rome, March 1933

(Make five copies of this manifesto and fix them to walls or distribute them or expedite them by post.)

Appendix F

Socialism and Fascism⁵

Humanist: You are right to fight against fascism. Fascism denies that which is most noble in man: reason, moral autonomy, responsibility. But tell me: in the name of what principle do you struggle against fascism?

Socialist: In the name of socialism.

Humanist: A great principle. But explain yourself better, because there are many socialisms: democratic, dictatorial, Christian, liberal. Just recently there has appeared a book by an esteemed writer entitled *Fascist Socialism*⁶. You know that there are those who hold that fascism is applied socialism in the manner of the western countries.

Socialist: False. Fascism is the dictatorship of the capitalist class. Socialism, independent from every school and doctrine, wants a society without classes, of free and equal subjects, where the means of production and exchange are in the hands of the collective.

H: The difference in truth is enormous. Nevertheless, between socialism, at least as it has been conceived and preached until now, and fascism, there exists some points of contact and some resemblances that weaken socialism in its struggle.

S: Which?

H: The small value accorded to the individual. The negative or external conception of freedom. State idolatry. Dictatorship.

S: I told you that the socialist state will be a society of free and equal men.

H: Indeed. But you always speak of society and men, never of man. For concrete man, of flesh and blood, you have substituted an average man, social man, who is to be respected in as much as he conforms to the scheme.

S: We are not anarchists, but socialists. We look to the great masses.

⁵Carlo Rosselli, "Socialismo e fascismo," in *Giustizia e Libertà*, 1 February 1935.

⁶Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, *Socialisme fasciste*, Paris: Gallimard, 1934.

H: The mass is not a person. It is composed of individual men. The problem is not in assuring justice and liberty to the masses in general, but a justice and liberty to man, to every man in particular.

S: It's the same thing.

H: No it's not. Because in one case the measure is social man in the abstract, who does not exist, or who exists in the heads of dictators and the makers of plans; while in the other is the measure of the concrete man in the reality of his relations, as he effectively lives in the factory, in the family, in the city.

S: That which is true for all men is true for each man. Man cannot be free except in a free society.

H: He will not be; he *could* be free.

S: No, he will be. Because once differences of class and economic oppression are abolished, every man will be free.

H: Here is where the second error lies hidden. Fascism holds that freedom comes from being a citizen of the State. Only within the State, says fascism, only by identifying your own will with that of the State--that is of the tyranny--the citizen can be free. Socialism holds that freedom derives from economic conditions.

S: Surely. A man who dies of hunger, who is exploited, can not be free.

H: True. But you confuse the essence of freedom--which is irreducible autonomy of the person--with the conditions necessary for its development. It is not said that a man, only because he is wealthy, or all men, because they live in a equal society, are free.

S: Why?

H: Because we will be free to live in the only way that the underlying economic substratum will consent to. That is to say, we will never be free. Freedom is either at the basis, in man, as a moral fact, or it does not exist.

S: Freedom does not exist. Only the concrete and historical freedoms of class exist. Today bourgeois liberty. Tomorrow socialist liberty.

H: Here is where you think like a fascist. This sentence reminds me of Mussolini who used to say to his opponents: the workers asked me for work, streets, schools, aqueducts, but not freedom. By making freedom an external product, a consequence of the economic system; by lowering it to a relative value, the

sentiment of autonomy, dignity and freedom in man weakens.

S: Nevertheless, only the socialists and the communists fight for freedom.

H: But as the last resources in a defensive battle, and almost always contradicting themselves by exalting the proletarian dictatorship.

S: A provisional dictatorship to arrive at true freedom.

H: The means must be in harmony with the ends. One does not arrive at freedom with dictatorship. Whoever battles dictatorship with dictatorship consolidates fascism. In the same way that he who fights stalinism in the name of another statolatry.

S: Socialism wishes to eliminate the State.

H: But meanwhile it reinforces it. Socialism is different from fascism, but fascism recalls old socialism in more than one aspect. The question today, before social organization, is of values. Before questions of systems, of reality. The opposition that must be made today is not between fascism and communism, fascism or socialism, and all the *isms* on the market. But between the abstract, despotic, dictatorial State, and the human person. We must attack fascism not in the name of schemes, but in the name of man. The rest, that is the socialist organization conceived not in view of the plan but of man, necessarily follows.

S: The old song. Man opposed to society, the one against the masses.

H: No. When you hear me speak against a certain conception of the masses, when you hear me define fascism as the perfect mass regime, do not picture me as an aristocrat disdainful of the multitudes. What I disdain is every form of collective life in which the humanity of each person is annulled. A union of free workers, a party where one enters freely, a multitude that resists being prostituted by demagoguery, is not a mass: they are associations, organizations, forms of redemption and liberation of the amorphous, instinctive, mechanical life of the masses. I am certain that one day Italy will be repelled by demagogic festivals and fireworks.

S: A protestant reformation?

H: No. Federalist reform. Autonomy. In the place of a centralizing State and relations of subjection, a society of federations as spontaneous as possible, free and rich in content. Every man at the center of the system of relations. Every man pushed by social organization to extract the maximum of his faculties, his freedoms. Because freedom is a positive value, which signifies the active life of

the person.

S: Liberal socialism?

H: If you wish...But definitions are meaningless.

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