

# FASCISM

PRICE  
THREE  
PENCE

CAPITALISM'S BLOODY DEFENDER

*"Let us have a dagger between  
our teeth, a bomb in our hands,  
and an infinite scorn of danger  
in our hearts."*

MUSSOLINI



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## Foreword

A mistaken idea is current in Australia that Fascism is purely an Italian institution, but this view is entirely false. It is true that Italy has been a favourable land for the development of the particular brand of class oppression known as Fascism, and, as this booklet shows, has taken a terrible toll from the ranks of the militant workers. Parliament merely functions as a democratic screen to conceal the real dictatorship of capitalism, which is vested in the financial monopolists—bankers, oil kings, coal barons, etc., and their military and political lackeys.

At periods of acute class struggle, the real power of the ruling class comes to light in the form of thug bands, which in time become crystallised into definite "Fascist" forces.

The Ku Klux Klan in U.S.A. openly terrorises radical workers; in Germany it is the "Steel Helmets"; in Austria the "Orgesch," while in England in 1926 a great army of scabs and thugs was organised to crush the workers during the General Strike.

In "freedom-loving" Australia the evil head of Fascism has shown itself in the operations of Captain Thatcher in Melbourne and the Argonauts' Society in Perth.

Fascism represents the final stage of Capitalism, when legal enactments no longer suffice to keep the workers in subjection, the democratic mask falls from the parliaments, the thug bands begin to operate, and the real character of capitalist dictatorship is revealed.

The following facts, which have been compiled by an International Commission sitting in Paris will convince the worker-reader of the bloody regime that these individuals uphold and the necessity for organising an efficient Labor Defence Movement to combat the actions of similar thug forces in this country.

Communist Party of Australia.

## FASCISM: Capitalism's Bloody Defender.

"I was greatly impressed by the combined greatness and simplicity of the man. The suspicion with which he was at first regarded had entirely disappeared and the Italian people felt for him a great love and devotion. This was shown in the spontaneous enthusiasm with which he always was greeted. All political parties had been banned and the people had been told plainly that they must set aside sectional bitterness and quarrels.

"Mussolini was working with the object of strengthening every national and religious institution in Italy."

Archbishop Duhig, of Brisbane.  
December, 1927.

"It does not matter how Fascism acts; it is sufficient to note the effective and indisputable results obtained by Fascism after five years of Government."

F. PASCALE,  
Fascist Representative in North Queensland.  
6th October, 1927.

This booklet will show what these people are eulogising.

## THE ITALY OF MUSSOLINI

Almost every day brings news of fresh crimes perpetrated by the Fascist authorities in the prisons of Italy. Torture is the accustomed method of the Fascist Special Tribunal in conducting its preliminary investigations and only too often the victims are driven insane or killed outright. Following are some of the facts which caused the Paris committee for the defence of victims of Fascism and white terror to address itself to the Italian Ambassador in Paris and to institute an official enquiry into the crimes of Fascism.

In Milan, in the summer of 1927, a hall porter named Antoine Sanvito and his wife were arrested because the police had discovered a store of illegal literature in the house where the two worked. A journalist named Leone, and a worker named Basselli, were arrested at the same time and for the same reason. All four

were submitted to the usual torture, but particularly Sanvito, for the Italian secret service men were of the opinion that he could give them information concerning the organisation responsible for issuing the literature. As a matter of fact, however, Sanvito knew nothing, and not all the torture was able to extract anything from him. The result was that Sanvito died as a result of the torture and his unfortunate wife went mad in prison.

At approximately the same time a former station-master, named Sandrio Pirola, was also arrested in Milan and charged with maintaining connections with anti-Fascist organisations. Pirola, too, died as the result of the tortures inflicted upon him. The authorities, however, informed his relatives that he had "hanged himself in his cell."

In the same prison in Milan a working woman, named Lina Morandotti, was also subjected to torture, with the result that she lost her reason. This prison has still a third victim to show. This was the former town councillor, Augusto Ruggieri, a socialist and a respected merchant. Ruggieri was brutally beaten up and then strangled.

The Marassi prison in Genoa is particularly infamous. In this prison the Fascists have their special methods for "making people talk." As a result of the application of these methods two political prisoners were murdered—Rueto of St. Chirico and Giuseppe Ravi of Genoa. Here, also, the Fascist authorities tried to cloak their crime, and reported to the relatives of the murdered men that they had "committed suicide."

There are still other prisons. In the Castle of Brescia, for instance, the "investigations" are carried out in an underground chamber, reminiscent of the Spanish Inquisition. Here the political prisoner, Paolo Betti, was "examined" and as a result he was made a cripple for life and lost his reason.

The foul crime in the prison of Perugia, where

Gastone Sozzi was done to death, is known to the whole world. These brutal and fiendish murders are by no means ended. Almost every day adds to the long list. Recently it was learned that an anti-Fascist, named Amadei, who was arrested in Milan, had gone mad in prison as a result of the treatment accorded to him.

The young student, Romolo Tranquilli, who was arrested in Como, allegedly in connection with the explosion in Milan, is now lying in hospital as a result of his treatment at the hands of the Fascists. Little hope is entertained of his recovery.

These are the better known cases. There are many more, and many which still remain to be discovered. The usual formula of the authorities when a prisoner has died at the hands of his torturers is "suicide," a formula which may well take rank with the old and transparent "shot whilst attempting to escape." But even if this formula were credited, what sort of a regime exists in prisons where political prisoners commit suicide one after the other rather than suffer it any longer?

### Italy, Under the Iron Heel of Fascism

The horrible facts which are leaking through the walls of the Fascist prisons must not be regarded as anything exceptional or temporary; on the contrary, they tally perfectly with all the other facts which are known about Fascism, which is now in the sixth year of its dictatorship. These six years have been one long drawn-out struggle to crush by violence all revolutionary and even liberal forces, and in general all those who are not in agreement with a system of brutal violence and oppression.

Left-wing intellectuals, non-party workers and peasants, liberals, democrats, the "Popolari" (the Catholic People's Party), republicans, socialists and communists, none of them have been exempt from the attentions of Fascism, oppression, barbarous assaults, castor oil, humiliation and even death. The so-called "Fascist

Restoration" has left a bloody trail behind it throughout the length and breadth of Italy, a trail of murder, rapine and violence.

Fascist violence did not commence with the "March on Rome," which took place in October, 1922. Its supporters had carried out wide-scale pillage and slaughter in 1921 in Turin, Florence, Rocastrada, Trieste, Bologna, Lomelino, and many other towns and villages. But with the successful termination of the "March," Fascist violence received official recognition and approval.

In the first three months of its existence as a governmental force, Fascism succeeded in destroying by violence over 200 non-Fascist local organisations, brutally maltreating over 500 people and murdering 80. And these were, so to speak, the opening bars of the Fascist regime in the country where Cesare Beccaria abolished the death sentence!

Year after year the balance of Fascist rule is the same. On the spectacular side are mass arrests, tortures and murders, and less spectacular, but still more lasting, is the progressive impoverishment of the Italian working people. In the year 1925-26 over 35,000 people were arrested on political grounds, 2000 trials of political prisoners took place, over 2200 people were injured as the result of assaults by Fascist and 200 people were murdered. In the same period 540 houses were raided and pillaged by bands of Fascists and the authorities officially prohibited no less than 1200 newspapers and periodicals of various kinds. It required a brave man to raise his voice against this bacchanalia of crime, and death was more often than not the result of protesting, irrespective of the position of the person in question; witness the brutal murder of **Giacomo Matteotti**, which was only a characteristic episode in a long chain of Fascist crimes.

#### **Fascism, The Annihilation of Democracy**

Fascism means the end of democracy, the destruction of all non-Fascist parties, organisations, newspapers, the abolition of Parliament and of all municipal and

other elected bodies and the suppression of all non-Fascist deputies, politicians, writers and scientists.

"Fascism is," in the words of Mussolini himself, "the antithesis of liberalism, it implies intolerance and suppression, it is the negation of democracy and the abolition of the marionette represented by the contemporary citizen." (From the pamphlet "Inchiodarli alle origini Roma," 1924, published by the Fascist government).

The favourite method employed by Fascism to dispose of its political opponents is that of physical annihilation. All anti and even non-Fascist parties have been prohibited and dissolved by violence.

Even the old Liberal Party, which in the beginning supported the Fascists and which counts amongst its members three former Prime Ministers of Italy, to wit, Giolitti, Orlando and Salandra, has not been spared. The leaders of the non-Fascist parties to-day are living either in exile, in deportation, or in prison. One of the leaders of the liberals, Signor Amendola, has been killed outright by the Fascists. The former Prime Minister, Nitti, is living in exile and has even been deprived of Italian citizenship.

The leaders of the Socialist Party, Turatti, Treves and Modigliani, are all in exile.

The leader of the "Popolari," the Catholic People's Party, Don Sturdas, is also in exile. The secretary of this party, however, de Gaspari, a former deputy, is in prison.

Almost all the communist deputies and leaders of the party are in prison or on the deportation islands. The former communist deputies who were arrested in defiance of their parliamentary immunity and the members of the former central committee of the Communist Party, have just received astounding sentences of hard labour on account of activity which was perfectly legal at the time.

The leaders of the Republican Party are also either in prison, on the deportation islands, or living in exile.

Long before the non-Fascist press was officially suppressed, its regular publication was made extremely difficult and sometimes impossible by the fact that armed bands of Fascists raided the editorial and publishing offices, destroyed all they could lay hands on, and very often set fire to the building. Irreparable damage was done in this way to the printing shops of the non-Fascist newspapers. A few of the newspapers treated in this fashion were "Il Mondo" and "Il Nuovo Paese," the organs of the Democratic Party in Rome; "Il Lavoro" in Genoa, "Il Nuovo Giornale," in Florence, which was one of those newspapers which supported Fascism in the beginning; "Voce Repubblicana," in Rome, the socialist "Avanti," in Milan, "Giustizia," the organ of the reformists, "Unita," "Ordine Nuovo," and "Il Lavoratore," of the Communists. The editors of the above newspapers were ruthlessly beaten by the clubs of the Fascists wherever they were caught.

Mussolini's own attitude towards Parliamentary institutions may be summed up in his own words used in Parliament: "I could turn this gloomy and venerable pile into an armed camp. I could arrest all its members and compose an exclusively Fascist Government, but for the moment I do not intend to do so. . . ."

It was not long, however, before Mussolini drove out all liberals, democrats and the "Popolari," from responsible positions.

Referring to the "Aventine Opposition," which was formed of all non-Fascist deputies after the murder of Matteotti, Mussolini declared:

"Let those gentlemen move but one finger, and my Blackshirts shall trample over their bodies . . . ."

And in 1925 finally Mussolini drove out 150 non-Fascist members of Parliament as he had threatened to do. All of these representatives of the people are now in

prison, on the deportation islands, or living in exile. The former were arrested in defiance of their Parliamentary immunity.

The municipal bodies fared no better at Mussolini's hands. They were completely wiped out. Eight thousand Mayors and tens of thousands of elected councillors were driven out of their positions and replaced by Fascist officials "Podesta."

The principle of blind violence which shows itself here was not limited to institutions and organisations. Private individuals, literary and scientific men, and all others suspected of anti-Fascist views, were treated to the same oppression, persecuted and often driven out of their posts. Referring to those prominent, artistic, literary and scientific men who signed the famous anti-Fascist manifesto, the Fascist "Popolo d'Italia" wrote: "Henceforth they must be considered as persons of no merit and no value to Italian civilisation. The fact that they may have contributed to our national civilisation in the past shall have no weight now. . . ."

The members of Parliament who have been murdered by the Fascists are Matteotti, Picinini, Amendola, Pilatti, Salvatore and Consolo.

The houses and homes of these members of Parliament and the houses of many prominent literary and scientific men have been sacked by the Fascists. The following are a few of those who have been victimised in this fashion: the famous Italian philosopher and writer, Benedetto Croce; the dramatist, Roberto Bracco; the woman writer, Amelia Rosseli; Professor Mariotti, Piraccini, Targetti, Professor Labriola; the former minister, ambassador and senator, Count Sforza, leader of the Italian Freemasons, and the lawyer, Torigiana.

To give a list of other more or less well-known figures in Italian public life who have been flung into prison, deported to the deportation islands, or otherwise victimised would be going beyond the scope of this work.

## The Fascist "Normalisation."

Following upon the brutal assassination of Matteotti and the great stir it created throughout the whole of the civilised world, the Fascist Government, which was experiencing a crisis at the time, began, under the pressure of anti-Fascist forces, to talk of "normalisation," i.e., of reducing the arbitrary and bloody terror of "irresponsible" Fascist bands to the limits of the "law."

Despite this talk of "normalisation" it was not long before a new and bloody wave of terror swept over Italy. At the end of October, 1925, pogroms were organised in Florence. Hundreds of anti-Fascists were terribly beaten and many people were killed, including the former deputy, Pilati, who had received serious wounds in the war and who was killed in the presence of his wife and little children. Scores of houses, offices and shops were plundered. The same occurred in other towns. This "normalisation," which was also carried out in Pisa, caused Cardinal Maffi, who witnessed it with his own eyes, to despatch the following telegram to the Home Secretary of the time:

"Yesterday Pisa suffered 'normalisation.' As a Bishop I wept, and as an Italian I blushed with shame. Demand a strict investigation. Where will such methods lead to?"

That such pogroms were not carried out without official approval can be seen from a speech delivered by Mussolini in September, 1925, in which he declared:

"If it should prove necessary we shall again raise our clubs and take up the knife . . . We shall not tolerate the abuse of our enemies. We shall destroy them, smash them and bury them . . ."

Towards the end of 1925 the Fascists set to work upon another enemy, the Freemasons. The "Battaglia Fasciste" declared:

"All means are just in the struggle against the Freemasons: The Club, the revolver, raids and the all-purifying flames . . . The Freemasons must be given no pause or pardon. They must be persecuted everywhere. Life must be made unbearable for them."

Fascist "normalisation" consisted in stretching the laws to include Fascist violence and illegality. The great weapon here was the introduction of the Exceptional Laws, which were promulgated by decree at the end of 1926. One of the first provisions of these laws was the re-introduction of the death sentence for "any attack upon the life or freedom of any member of the Royal Family or upon the life or freedom of the head of the Government (Mussolini)."

Paragraph 2 of the new laws also provides the death sentence for the crimes enumerated in paragraphs 104, 107, 108, 120 and 252 of the Criminal Code.



"Freedom" Under Capitalism

These crimes are conspiracy, open rebellion, secret organisation, etc.

These extraordinary laws, of course, needed a special instrument for their application, and this instrument was created at the same time in the form of the now notorious Fascist Special Tribunal, which is composed of

a Fascist general and Fascist officers and from whose verdict there is no legal possibility of appeal. The unlimited and arbitrary power placed in the hands of this "court" means simply that any anti-Fascist political action can be dealt with on the basis of these paragraphs, as has been proved recently by the terrible sentences passed by the Special Tribunal against the leaders of the communists and others.

Paragraph 3 of the laws provides sentences ranging from 15 to 30 years for the originators of such crimes, and sentences ranging from 5 to 15 years for people found guilty of having intended to commit them, of having discussed the committal of them and for all people "publicly approving of such crimes."

Paragraph 4 provides for from 3 to 10 years imprisonment for any person found guilty of having attempted to resuscitate a society, organisation or party which has been officially disbanded. A sentence of 5 years' imprisonment is awaiting anyone who belongs to any such organisation or who professes the doctrines, programme of methods of action of such organisation.

Paragraph 5 provides sentences ranging from 5 to 15 years' imprisonment for any person "spreading abroad or communicating to others in any form whatever, false or exaggerated information concerning the internal situation of the country." Further, the victim is to be deprived of his property and the right to occupy any public or official position for the rest of his life.

Paragraph 6 constitutes the Special Tribunal "which shall consist of a president in the person of a general of the Royal army, navy or air force, or of the Fascist militia."

Such tribunals are called into being at the decision of the Secretary of State for War, who determines their personnel and the basis of their operations. The jurispru-

dence governing the activity of these tribunals is that of a state of war. All rights appertaining in time of war to the commander-in-chief are transferred to the Secretary of State for War. The verdict and sentences of such tribunals are final, there being no appeal.

Accused may be defended by one lawyer chosen from amongst the officers on active military service or by any other lawyer having the right to practice; the president of the tribunal may, however, at his discretion, refuse to permit any lawyer to plead who is not on active military service. The initiative for the commencement of any prosecution before the Special Tribunal is taken by the military authorities or by the Secretary of State for War himself.

### A Murder Machine

In reality, of course, this so-called tribunal is nothing but a machine for automatically disposing of the enemies of Fascism. At its trials there is nothing worth calling an investigation, argumentation or defence. This was made very clear by the well known anti-Fascist, Professor Salvemini, in a letter to the "Manchester Guardian," published on the 7th May, 1928:

Sir,—

The Fascist tribunal referred to in the letter published in the "Manchester Guardian" of May 3rd, has between May, 1927, and April, 1928, sentenced 309 persons to an aggregate of 1,754 years' imprisonment. Three instances will suffice to show the mentality of the judges.

1. The Fascist "Corriere della Sera" of October 25 and 26, 1927, gave the report of a trial of 14 communists of Lugo:

On March 1, 1927, the communist Alfredo Tamburini died of tuberculosis at Voltans di Lugo. His comrades seized the opportunity of the funeral cortege on the following day to improvise a subversive demonstration. Incited by them, a certain number of working people left work and joined the procession, wearing red carnations in their button-holes.

As a result of this "crime" the Special Tribunal on October 25, 1927, sentenced three persons to five years', five persons to two years', two persons to one year's imprisonment—for "having taken advantage of the funeral to stage a subversive demonstration

and thus make propaganda for the doctrines and programme of the dissolved Communist Party."

2. In the "Corriere della Sera" of November 13, 1927, there appeared the following:

The Special Tribunal tried Marino Graziano and Giordina Rosetti, of Mongrando (Biella), on a charge of conspiring to change the constitution of the State. . . . Both are described in the police report as members of the Communist Party. The two are engaged. Copies of a communist newspaper were found at the house of the men, and leaflets of a seditious character, printed by Graziano, were found at the house of his fiancée. Graziano admitted having printed and distributed the leaflets, but denied that his fiancée knew anything about the matter. Rosetti denied being a communist. The Tribunal sentenced them both to 18 years' imprisonment.

3. In January, 1928, twenty communists of Florence were tried for holding a meeting in the house of one of their number on October 13, 1924, that was at a time when the Communist Party was a lawful organisation and two years before it was disbanded. Several youths armed with revolvers attended the meeting, which discussed the proposal of setting up armed bands on the Fascist model. The amnesty of July 31, 1925, wiped out this, with all other political crimes. At their trial in January, 1928, the Public Prosecutor propounded the following theory:

It is true that in July, 1925, an amnesty was granted, but it must be borne in mind that the crimes of conspiracy and that of setting up armed bands are permanent, that is, they endure up to the moment when the culprits give explicit proof that they have renounced their crime. The onus of proof lies with the defendant. ("Corriere della Sera," January 31, 1928.

On this ground he asked for the condemnation of 15 of the 20 defendants, beginning with the deputy Signor Damen, for whom he asked 10 years' imprisonment. The Tribunal acquitted nine of the accused, and in compensation increased Signor Damen's dose of imprisonment to 12 years.

Those accused of the outrage at Milan will be tried by a tribunal of this nature. It must be borne in mind that the Fascist Secret Service is attached to the same militia which provides the judges, and must try at all costs to obtain sentences, because, having given proof of inefficiency by not having prevented the outrage, it must show itself capable at least of discovering the authors of the crime. If neither the public nor the press are to

be admitted to a trial of this kind before such a tribunal, no one will believe in the justice of its sentence.

Yours, etc.,  
G. SALVEMINI.

20 Warwick Square, London,  
S.W. 1. May 4.

The Special Tribunal has passed severe sentences of many years imprisonment for no other offence than having afforded material relief to political prisoners and their dependents or, in the case of the dependents, for having accepted such relief.

A particularly irksome form of oppression is represented by the so-called "Amonizione" or special supervision. Thousands of people suspected of anti-Fascist leanings are inscribed on the list of "suspects" and subjected to special supervision. These unfortunates are little more than slaves at the beck and call of the local Fascist police authorities. They have no right to change their place of residence without permission or to leave the district in which they are living. They may not be absent from their homes after sunset or before dawn. They may not go to public meetings, restaurants, cafes, or other public places and they must report regularly to the police, who frequently search their rooms and pay them surprise visits in the middle of the night.

#### **Fascism Brings Semi-Starvation for the Working People.**

Fascism claims to have carried out a "rationalisation of industry" and thus improved the welfare of Italy. In fact, however, apart from how it may stand with regard to the privileged few, the situations of the vast masses of the people has steadily deteriorated. At the present time Fascist Italy has about one million unemployed. Many thousands of workers and peasants have immigrated and many thousands more are immigrating in order to escape from the economic situation created by Fascism for the masses of the people. The average worker in Italy to-day earns below the minimum of existence fixed by the Fascists themselves. According to the standards fixed by the official Fascist bulletin of the City of Milan,



the existence minimum for a worker and his family is 268 lira a week, whereas skilled workers in the various branches of industry earn from 124 to 204 lira only a week. An unskilled worker in Northern and Central Italy, in Abruzzia, Calabria, and Sicily, earns for a normal working day from 4½ to 7 lira, or from 27 to 42 lira a week.

Since Fascism has come into undisputed power the consumption of cereals has decreased as follows:—

Per Head of the Population in	1913	1922	1923	1924	1925
Grain (Kilogrammes) . . . . .	240	201	190	178	175
Maize (Kilogrammes) . . . . .	87	62	70	70	73

Lest the reader think the Italian workers under Fascism have taken to eating meat, the consumption of meat in Italy as compared with other countries is as follows:—

Great Britain, per capita	60	Kilogrammes
Germany	47	„
France	45	„
Italy	18	„

The Fascists explain these figures by referring to the "frugality" of the Italian workers and peasants. The fact is, however, that the toiling masses of Italy can hardly obtain enough bread to satisfy their wants and that they are suffering from constant under-nourishment. It is clear that such a "restoration" and such "rationalisation" can only provoke still further discontent amongst the working population and increase the difficulties of Fascism. But the Fascists have still another card. Give the workers and peasants enough to eat and drink, they can't, or won't, but crush the discontent they think they can and will, with the weapon of Fascist reaction and terror.

Fascism is the enemy of all that is progressive in mankind and it is the duty of every progressive minded man and woman to join actively in the fight against Fascism and its whole brutal system of terror and violence.

Over a year ago Henri Barbusse wrote the follow-

ing in his appeal to all progressive intellectuals:—

"When the history of contemporary Italian Fascism is read by our ancestors they will be startled. In modern times there is hardly a parallel to this regime of frank and shameless pillage, of murder and crime in every conceivable form. But what will startle them still more is the fact that a people were prepared to tolerate a state of things which threw them back into the Dark Ages, and perpetuated the reign of insatiable parasites upon the body of society."

During the past year the state of affairs in Italy has become intolerable. Every political prisoner runs the danger of being murdered in prison long before he has a chance of standing his trial. Every increase of the internal difficulties of Fascism is promptly followed by an increase of Fascist reaction and terror against its opponents. Isolated acts of self-defence serve the Fascists as a welcome pretext for bloody reprisals and oppression.

Still more, the Fascists themselves provoke acts of individual terror in order afterwards to institute a reign of terror and at the same time pose as the just avenger. The material collected by the Paris Committee for the defence of the victims of Fascism in connection with the Milan explosion, alleged to have been an attempt upon the life of the King of Italy, is characteristic. This material proves positively that the Milan explosion was brought about at the instance of high Fascist officials and that Mussolini himself was informed of the matter, the idea being, of course, to create a pretext for the final annihilation of all anti-Fascists.

The following is what **Phillip Turatti**, the socialist leader, wrote about the bomb explosion in Milan before it became generally known that the explosion was the work of the Fascists themselves:—

"The explosion of an infernal machine before the opening of the exhibition in Milan by the King of Italy, an explosion whose origin is still veiled in the deepest mystery, has given the Fascists the opportunity they required to let loose a new wave

of terror and to deprive their unfortunate victims of the last if only nominal guarantees for receiving justice they still possessed.

"The Special Tribunal of the Blackshirts which is anti-constitutional and embodies the spirits of civil war and reprisals, has been transferred from Rome to Milan in order to deceive public opinion abroad into believing that an investigation will really take place. In reality, however, it has gone to Milan to carry out the instructions of Mussolini. Thousands of workers and others suspected of anti-Fascism are being arrested indiscriminately.

"This wave of Fascist terror is not even confined to Italy itself, for Fascism is taking advantage of the explosion to increase its campaign against those anti-Fascists who have been compelled to migrate. The Fascist press is openly inciting its supporters to destroy anti-Fascists wherever they can be found, whether in Italy or in refuge abroad.

"It has already been announced that those responsible for the explosion must be found. The Fascist authorities must have their prey at all costs. It is clear that some incredible conspiracy will be discovered, in other words, that it will be first of all invented and then discovered. The press, even the Fascist press, has received an order prohibiting the publication of the results of the investigations, for this would prove the innocence of the accused.

"Those finally put on trial will have to defend themselves before a tribunal which robs them of the elementary rights of defence. The tribunal itself appoints the lawyers for the defence and can prevent them from examining the documents in the case until the last moment. **If necessary the trial itself may be heard behind closed doors.**

"These methods of trial, which revive the atmosphere of civil war in times of peace and which sub-

who are enslaved in their own country, a voice apostitute hatred and revenge for jurisprudence, represent a cynical negation of the most elementary principles of justice and are in flagrant contradiction to the feelings and customs of all peoples who have emancipated themselves from barbarism. They are nothing but a brutal violation of the most elementary principles of human civilisation.

"The Fascist press, and this means the whole of the Italian press, for this unfortunate country has been gagged, is deliberately inciting the lowest and most brutal passions of mankind. It demands executions under all circumstances, executions in the country of Beccaria, where Fascism has the credit of re-introducing the death sentence, and at that for 'crimes' of conviction.

"People who are absolutely innocent of this crime, people who are only "under suspicion" have, in fact, already been sentenced to death in advance, the formal sentence of death will follow!

"And even if some last vestiges of shame should cause the Special Tribunal to base its verdict upon seeming evidence, we know too well the value of such evidence in a country where 'confessions' and 'evidence' are **extorted under torture.**

"The liberal minded people of all civilised nations must raise their voices in protest now before it is too late. Their protest must find a powerful echo in the press in the democratic countries and must be raised in all democratic Parliaments.

"The trial of those accused in connection with the explosion must take place publicly and the rights of the defence must be safeguarded. The verdict and the evidence must also be published in full.

"Our voice is the voice of the Italian workers

pealing to the workers of the world to prevent that one crime, in the worst case a result of individual despair, shall be made the excuse for a crime far more beastly, the official and cold-blooded extermination of a number of absolutely innocent people.

"The whole world must rise in protest against the foul murder which the Italian Fascists are planning to perpetrate upon the helpless people of Italy and against mankind itself!"

The Fascist Government intends to use the atmosphere which its agents have deliberately whipped up in connection with the explosion in Milan to conduct a number of political trials which it had postponed for a long time.

A series of big political trials has been prepared for a long time and the Fascist authorities have only been awaiting a favourable opportunity, which has now come. These trials are intended to intimidate all anti-Fascist elements and to destroy the leaders by putting them out of harm's way for long sentences of hard labour.

The first of these mass-trials has already taken place in Rome, the trial of the former deputies of the Communist Party and of the members of the former central committee of the party. All of the accused in this trial were arrested at a time when the Communist Party was perfectly legal and the former deputies were arrested in defiance of their parliamentary immunity. The accused were tried before an exceptional court, the Special Tribunal, and under exceptional laws which were introduced at the end of 1926, for activity which was perfectly legal at the time it was carried out, i.e., before the introduction of the exceptional laws and before the constitution of the Special Tribunal.

The trial itself was a juridical monstrosity and the

sentences were in accordance with the tenure of the whole process. The sentences were as follows:—

Borin Iginio . . . . .	27	years and 4 months' hard labour
Marchioro Domenico . . . . .	20	„ hard labour
Granschi Antonio . . . . .	20	„ „ „
Riboldi Ezio . . . . .	17	„ „ „
Terracini Umberto . . . . .	16	„ „ „
Bibolotti Aladino . . . . .	16	„ „ „
Roveda Giovanni . . . . .	16	„ „ „
Scoccimaro Manio . . . . .	16	„ „ „
Nicola Giovanni . . . . .	16	„ „ „
Tettamanti Battista . . . . .	16	„ „ „
Flechchia Vittorio . . . . .	16	„ „ „
Gidona Bonaventura . . . . .	16	„ „ „
Stefanini Giacomo . . . . .	16	„ „ „
Ferrari Enrico . . . . .	16	„ „ „

Two other accused were also sentenced to 16 years' hard labour each. The accused woman, Antia Pusterla, received 9 years and 8 months' hard labour and other accused received 5 years' hard labour each. Twenty of the accused persons received sentences totalling over 300 years of hard labour, plus an enormous sum in fines. Added to this, the accused are all to be placed under police supervision for 3 years following upon the expiration of their sentences.

In Milan preparations are being made for a new mass-trial against non-party workers and professional men. The accused in this new trial will also be put before the Special Tribunal and tried upon the basis of the exceptional laws for their political, journalistic and parliamentary activities at a time when these activities were perfectly legal. Even from the standpoint of the Fascists themselves, the activity of these men can only be termed criminal if the exceptional laws are invested with retrospective force, and that would be a proceeding unparalleled in the history of jurisprudence. In any case, the Fascist Government is not particular about the methods it uses to attain its ends. Everything is being done to secure the passing of the death sentence for the bare propagation of non-Fascist ideas.

In order to counter the brutal attacks of the Fascists and to ward off a new campaign of bloody legal terror, to assist the victims of Fascism and to prevent further such terrible sentences being passed, sentences which are often in effect worse than the death sentence itself, it is the duty of all honest men and women to raise their voices in loud protest against the bestial regime instituted by Mussolini.

**Demand that an International Committee of Inspection** visit the Italian prisons and the deportation islands. Demand trials in full public! Demand that the defendants be given the right to choose their own lawyers, if necessary foreign lawyers! Demand the abolition of the death sentence, the abolition of the torture system, the abolition of the Special Tribunal and the abolition of the exceptional laws! Demand an unconditional amnesty for all political prisoners! These are the demands which must be raised energetically by all workers, peasants and progressive intellectuals all over the civilised world against the bloody horrors of Mussolini and his accomplices!

**Organise mass Trade Union delegations of protest to Fascist Consuls or other representatives wherever they are located in Australia.**



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