

## I – THE CRISIS OF MODERN CIVILISATION

Modern civilisation has based its specific foundation on the principle of liberty which states that man is not a mere instrument to be used by others but rather a main autonomous living being. Looking back at this definition all those aspects of social life that were not respectful of this principle have been placed on trial, in a great historical process.

1) All nations have been recognised the equal right to organise themselves into independent States. All peoples, defined by ethnic, geographic, linguistic and historical characteristics, were to find, within the State organisation created according to their own particular concept of political life, that instrument best suited to their own needs, without any outside intervention. The ideology of national independence was a powerful stimulus to progress. It helped overcome narrow-minded parochialism and generated a deeper sense of solidarity against foreign oppression. It eliminated many of the obstacles that hindered the circulation of people and merchandise and, within the territory of each new State, it extended the institutions and systems of more advanced societies to less developed populations. Unluckily, however, the seeds of capitalist imperialism have expanded to the point of forming totalitarian States and to the unleashing of world wars and our generation has been witness.

Now the nation is no longer regarded as the historical product of communities of men that, as the result of a lengthy process, have increased similarities of customs and aspirations and consider their State as the most effective organisation of collective life within the framework of the whole human society. It has, on the contrary, become a divine entity, an organism that has to consider only its own existence, its own development, without the least regard for the damage this might cause to others.

The absolute sovereignty of national States has given each of them the desire to dominate, since each one feels threatened by the strength of the others, and considers, as its living space, an increasingly vast territory wherein it will have the right to free movement and can rely on itself without any other help. This desire to dominate cannot be placated except by the predominance of the strongest State over all the others.

As a consequence of all this, the State is no longer the guardian of civil liberty but it has been transformed into the master of vassals bound to servitude, and it holds within its power all the faculties needed to achieve the maximum war-efficiency. Even during peacetime, considered to be a pause during which to prepare for subsequent, inevitable wars, by now the military class predominates over civilian society in many countries, by making more and more difficult the good working of free political systems. Expressions of civil policy, therefore, such as schools, research, productivity. administrations, act with difficulty and are mainly directed towards increasing military strength. Women are considered merely as producers of soldiers and are awarded prizes in much the same way as prolific cattle. Since the very earliest age, children have been taught to handle weapons and to hate foreigners. Individual liberty is almost annihilated since everyone is part of the military establishment and constantly subject to be called in on the armed forces. Repeated wars force men to abandon families, jobs, property, often demanding the ultimate sacrifice for reasons of which no one can really understand the value. It takes just a few days to destroy the results of decades of common effort made in order to increase the general well being.

Totalitarian States are those that have most coherently achieved the unification of all

forces, by effecting the greatest concentration and the highest degree of autarky. These organisations have proved to be the ones most suited to the current international environment. Should one nation move a step towards more accentuated totalitarianism, it would immediately be followed by the others, drawn through the very same furrow by their will to survive.

2) The equal right of all citizens to participate in the process of establishing the State's will has been recognised. This should have been the synthesis of the freely expressed, changeable economic and ideological needs of all the social groups. Such a political organisation has allowed the correction or at least the minimising of many of the most jarring injustices inherited from previous regime. But freedom of the press, of assembly, and the increasing extension of suffrage, made the defence of old privileges more and more difficult, while maintaining a representative system of government.

The poor slowly learned how to use these instruments to fight for the rights acquired by the privileged classes. Taxes on unearned income and inheritances, increasing duties to be paid on larger incomes, tax exemptions for low incomes and indispensable goods; free public schooling; increased social security spending; land reforms; control of factories and manufacturing plants – all of them were now threatening the privileged classes in their well-fortified citadels.

Even the privileged classes who had consented to the equality of political rights, could not accept the fact that the under-privileged took advantage of it in order to achieve a concrete economic and social equality that would have given meaningful significance to the real liberty. At the end of the First World War, the threat became too serious; it was only natural that these classes warmly welcomed and supported the birth of dictatorships that took legal instruments away from their adversaries.

On other hand, the birth of immense industrial and banking groups, and of trade unions including whole armies of workers, groups and unions pressing the government in order to obtain policies clearly favourable to their particular interests, threatened to dissolve the State into so many economic baronies, bitterly fighting against each other: Liberal, democratic systems became the tools these groups used to exploit all of society even more, and consequently lost their prestige. In this way they were more and more convinced that only a totalitarian State, in which individual liberties were also abolished, could somehow resolve the conflicts of interest that existing political institutions were unable to control.

As a matter of fact, the totalitarian regimes consolidated, generally speaking, the various social categories at those levels they had gradually reached by using police control of every aspect of citizen's life, and by violently getting rid of all dissenting voices, these regimes have barred every legal possibility of further correction of the present situation. This ensured, then, the existence of a thoroughly parasitic class of absentee land owners and enjoyers of an income who contributed to social productivity only by cutting the coupons off their stocks; the monopoly holders and the chain stores that exploit the consumers and make the sums set apart by small investors to vanish; the plutocrats hidden behind the scenes, pulling the politicians' strings and running the State machinery for their own exclusive advantage, pretending to be interested in higher national interests. The colossal fortunes of a very few have been preserved, and the misery of the masses as well, excluded from enjoyment of the fruits of modern culture. They have substantially preserved an economic regime in which material resources and labour, which ought to be

applied to the satisfaction of fundamental needs for the development of vital human energies, are instead addressed to the satisfaction of the most futile wishes of those capable of paying the highest prices; an economic regime in which, through the right of inheritance, the power of money is perpetuated in the same class, and is transformed into a privilege without any correspondence to the social value of the services rendered. The field of proletarian possibilities is so small that in order to make a living, workers are often forced to accept exploitation by anyone who offers a job.

In order to keep the working classes immobilised and subjugated, the trade unions have been transformed, from the free organisations of struggle they were, directed by individuals who enjoyed the trust of their associates, into organs for police surveillance run by employees chosen by the ruling class and responsible only to them. If improvements are made in this economic regime, they are simply and only dictated by the military needs, that together with the reactionary ambitions of privileged classes have given rise to and strengthen totalitarian States.

3) The permanent value of the spirit of criticism has been asserted against authoritarian dogmatism. Everything that was affirmed had to be truthful and verifiable, or disappear. The greatest achievements of our society in every field are due to the methodicalness of this open-minded attitude. But this spiritual liberty did not survive the crises created by the totalitarian States. New dogmas to be accepted like articles of faith, or hypocritically, are taking over all fields of knowledge.

Though no one knows what a race is, and the most elementary notions of history emphasise the absurdity of the statement, physiologists are required to believe, demonstrate and convince that people belong to a chosen race, simply because this myth is needed by imperialism to excite the masses to hate and pride. The most evident concepts of economic science must be considered as anathema if the autarchic policy, trade balances and other old chestnuts of mercantilism can be presented as extraordinary discoveries of our times. Because of the economic interdependence of all parts of the world, the vital space needed by many population that wants to maintain a living standard consonant with modern civilisation, can only be the entire globe. But the pseudo-science of geopolitics has been created, and its aim is to demonstrate the validity of the theory of living spaces, in order to legitimate theoretical cover to the imperialist desire to overpower.

History is falsified in its essential data, in the interests of the ruling classes. Libraries and bookshops are cleared away of all works that are not considered to be orthodox. The shadows of obscurantism over again threaten to suffocate the human spirit. The social ethic of liberty and equality is undermined. Men are no longer considered free citizens who can use the State in order to reach collective purposes. They are, instead, servants of the State, which decides their goals and the will of those who hold the power is masked behind the will of the State. Men are no longer subjects of law; they are arranged hierarchically and expected to obey all their superiors, whose leaders is a suitable deified Leader, without discussion. The regime, built on castes, springs up again irresistible, out of its own ashes.

This reactionary, totalitarian civilisation, after triumphing in a series of countries, finally found, in Nazi Germany, the power that was thought to be capable of drawing the final consequences. After meticulous preparation, boldly and unscrupulously taking advantage from the rivalries, egoism, stupidity of others, carrying other European vassal States – among which primarily Italy – and becoming allied with Japan that is aiming at the

very same goals in Asia, Germany has launched itself in a campaign of overpowering. Its victory would mean the final consolidation of totalitarianism in the world. All its characteristics would be exasperated to the greatest degree, and progressive forces would be condemned for many years to the role of simple negative opposition.

The traditional arrogance and intolerance of the German military classes can give us an idea of what their dominance would have been like, after a victorious war. In order to command, the victorious Germans might even concede five years of generosity towards other European peoples, formally respecting their territories and their political institutions, satisfying at the same time the false sentiment of patriotism of those who consider the colours of the boundary fence, and the nationality of the prominent politicians as being more important than the ratio of power and the effective content of the State institutions. However camouflaged, the reality is always the same: a new division of humanity into Spartans and Helots.

Even a compromise solution between the two struggling sides would be one more step ahead for totalitarianism; in fact all together countries which were able to elude Germany's grasp would be forced to adopt the same forms of political organisation, in order to be adequately prepared for the war to come.

But if Hitler's Germany did succeed in felling the minor States one by one, this action has forced increasingly powerful forces to join battle. The courageous fighting spirit of Great Britain, even in that most critical moment when it was the only one to face the enemy caused the Germans to collide against the valiant resistance of the Russian Army, and gave America the time it needed to mobilise its infinite productive resources. And this struggle against German imperialism is closely linked to the Chinese people's against Japanese imperialism.

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

Day after day the war of the Allies awakens the desire for liberation more forcefully, even in those countries which had submitted to violence and had lost their way owing to the blow they received. And it has even re-awakened this desire in the very Axis populations who realise they have been dragged into a desperate situation, simply to satisfy their rulers' lust for power.

The slow process, due to which infinite masses of men passively let themselves be shaped by the new regime, adjusted to it and even contributed to its consolidation, has come to a halt. And the opposite process has begun. Within this huge wave, slowly gathering momentum there are included all the progressive forces, the most enlightened groups of the working classes that have not let themselves be swayed, either by the terror or by flattery, from their ambition to achieve a better quality of living; the most conscious elements of the intellectual classes, offended by the forced degradation of human intelligence; businessmen and investors who, being able to undertake new initiatives, want to free themselves of the trappings of bureaucracy and national autarchy, that encumber all their movements; and all the others who, thanks to an innate sense of dignity, will not be bent by the humiliation of servitude.

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

## II – POST-WAR DUTIES – EUROPEAN UNITY

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

In the brief, intense period of general crises (during which the States will lie broken, during which the popular masses are anxiously awaiting for a new message and will, meanwhile, like molten matter, burn, being easily poured into new moulds, capable of welcoming the guidance of serious internationalists) the classes which were the most privileged under the old national systems will attempt, underhanded or violently, to moderate the feelings, the internationalist passions and they will ostentatiously begin the reconstruct the old, State institutions. And the English leaders, perhaps in agreement with the Americans, may try to push things in this direction, in order to restore the policy of the balance of power, in the apparent and immediate interests of their empires.

The conservative forces, that is: the directors of the basic institutions of the national States; the top-ranking officers in the armed forces up to, where possible, monarchies; the groups of monopolistic capitalism that have bound their profits to the fortunes of the States; the big landowners and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, who can expect their parasitical income only in a stable, conservative society; and following these, the interminable band of people who depend on them or who are simply misled by their traditional power. All these reactionary forces already feel the structure is creaking, and are trying to save their skins. A collapse would deprive them all of a sudden of all the guarantees they have enjoyed up to now, and would expose them to the attack of the progressive forces.

### The revolutionary situation: old and new trends

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

The democratic factions do not deny violence on principle, but they wish to use it only when the majority is convinced it is indispensable, that is, when it is little more than an almost superfluous "dot" over an "i". They are, then, useful leaders only in times of ordinary administration, during which almost all population is (generally) convinced of the validity of the basic institutions that they are to be modified, only in relatively secondary aspects. During revolutionary times, when the institutions must not simply be

## The Ventotene Manifesto

administered, but rather created, democratic procedures fail clamorously. The pitiful impotence of democratic faction during the Russian, German, Spanish revolutions are the three most recent examples. In these situations, once the old state apparatus had fallen, along with its laws and its administration, there is an immediate flourishing of assemblies and popular delegations in which all the progressive socialist forces converge and agitate, either pretending to be respectful of former legality, or scorning it. The population does have some fundamental needs to satisfy, but it does not know exactly what it wants or how to act. A thousand bells ring in its ears. With its millions of minds, it cannot orientate itself, and it breaks up in a number of tendencies, currents and factions, struggling with one other.

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

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

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

Among the various proletarian tendencies, followers of the classist politics and collectivist ideal, the communists early recognized the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient following to assure victory. They therefore organized themselves, – differently from the other popular parties – into a rigidly disciplined movement. It has exploited the Russian myth in order to organise the workers, but it does not accept their word as law and it does use the workers in the most disparate manoeuvres.

This attitude makes the Communists, during revolutionary crises, more efficient than the democrats. But their maintaining the workers separate as much as they can from the

other revolutionary forces – by preaching to them that their "real" revolution is yet to come – turns them into a sectarian element which, in decisive moments, weakens the sum of the progressive forces. Besides this, their absolute dependence upon the Russian State, which has repeatedly used them in pursuing its national policies, prevents this Party from undertaking political activity with continuity. They always need to hide behind a Karoly, a Blum, a Negrin, and then to go along towards ruination with the democratic puppets that had been used. Power is attained and is maintained, not simply through cunning, but with the capacity of responding to the needs of modern society in an organic and vital manner.

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

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

The reactionary forces have capable men and officers who have been trained to command and who will fight ruthlessly to preserve their supremacy. When circumstances are very hard, deceitfully they will show themselves as the lovers of liberty, of peace, of general well-being, of the poorer classes.

Already in the past we have seen how they made use of popular movements, and they paralysed, deflected and transformed them into exactly the opposite of what they were. No doubt they will be the most dangerous forces to be faced.

The point they will seek to exploit is the restoration of the national State. Thus they will be able to grasp the most widespread of popular feelings, most deeply offended by recent events, most easily handled to reactionary purposes: the patriotic sentiment. In this way they can also hope to confuse their adversaries' ideas more easily, since for the popular masses, the only political experience acquired up to this time has been within the national context, it is therefore fairly easy to direct them and their more shortsighted leaders towards the reconstruction of the States "felled" by the tempest.

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

The question which must be resolved first failing which progress is but mere appearance, is definitive abolition of division of Europe into national, sovereign States. The collapse of the majority of the States on the continent under German steam-roller has already placed the destinies of the European populations on common ground: either all

together they will submit to Hitler's dominion, or after his fall, all together they will enter a revolutionary crisis, and they will not find themselves adamantly distinct in solid, States structures. The general spirit today is already far more disposed than it was in the past towards a federal reorganisation of Europe. The hard experience of the last decades has opened the eyes even of those who refused to see, and has matured many circumstances favourable to our ideal.

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

On the other hand, the end of the sense of security, inspired by an unassailable Great Britain which advised "splendid isolation" to the British; the French dissolution army and the disintegration of the Republic at the first serious collision with the Germany forces ( a result which, and we hope so, might have lessened the chauvinistic attitude of absolute Gallic superiority); and particularly the risk of total enslavement are all circumstances that are favouring the constitution of a federal regime, which will place an end to the current anarchy. And the fact that England has accepted the principle of Indian Independence; and that France has potentially lost its entire empire in recognising its defeat, make it easier to find a basis of agreement for a European arrangement of colonial possessions.

To all of this must be added the disappearance of some of the most important dynasties, and the fragility of the bases which sustain the ones that survive. It must be taken into account that these dynasties, by considering the various countries as their own traditional perquisites, together with the powerful interests backing them, represented a serious obstacle to the rational organisation of the United States of Europe, which can only be based on the republican constitution of the federates countries. And, once the horizon of the Old Continent is passed beyond, and all the people who make up humanity join together for a common plane, it will have to be recognised that the European Federation is the only conceivable guarantee that relationships with American and Asiatic peoples can exist on the basis of peaceful co-operation, while awaiting a more distant future, when the political unity of the entire globe becomes a possibility.

The dividing line between progressive and reactionary parties no longer follows the formal line of greater or lesser democracy, or of more or less socialism to be instituted;

rather the division falls along the line, very new and substantial, that separates the party members into two groups. The first is made up of those who conceive the essential purpose and goal of struggle as the ancient one, that is, the conquest of national political power – and who, although involuntarily, play into the hands of reactionary forces, letting the incandescent lava of popular passions set in the old moulds, and thus allowing old absurdities to arise once again. The second are those who see the creation of a solid international State as the main purpose; they will direct popular forces toward this goal, and, having won national power, will use it first and foremost as an instrument for achieving international unity.

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

If a sufficient number of men in the most important European countries understands this, then the victory will shortly be at hand, as both the situation and the spirit will be favourable to their project. They will have before them parties and factions that have already been disqualified by the disastrous experience of the last twenty years. It will be the moment of new action and it will also be the moment for new men: the MOMENT FOR A FREE AND UNITED EUROPE.

### III – POST-WAR DUTIES – THE REFORM OF SOCIETY

A free and united Europe is the necessary premise to the strengthening of modern civilisation, that has been temporarily halted the totalitarian era. By the end of this era immediately the historical process of the struggle against social inequalities and privileges will revive in full. All the old conservative structures which have hindered this process will either have collapsed or will be in a state of collapse. This crisis must be exploited, with decision and courage.

In order to respond to our needs, the European revolution must be socialist, that is its goal must be the emancipation of the working classes and the realisation of more humane living conditions for them. The orientation to be chosen for the steps to take can not, however, depend solely on the purely doctrinaire principle which states that private ownership of the material means of production must, as a general rule, be abolished, and only temporarily tolerated when there is no other choice to be made. The general state control of the economy was the first, utopian, form in which the working classes imagined their liberation from the yoke of capitalism. Once it is achieved, however, it does not produce the hoped results: on the contrary, a regime comes into existence in which the entire population is subject to a restricted class of bureaucrats who run the economy.

The truly fundamental principle of socialism, in which the general collectivisation was

nothing more than a hurried and erroneous deduction, is the principle which states that the economic forces must not dominate man, but rather – like the forces of Nature – they must be subject to man, guided and controlled by him in the most rational way, so that the broadest strata of the population will not become their victims.

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

Private property must be abolished, limited, corrected, extended: according to the different situations and not according to principle. This guideline is easily inserted into the process of forming a European economic life freed from nightmares of militarism or national bureaucratism. The rational solution must replace the irrational one even in the consciousness of the working class. In order to describe the content of this guideline, in greater detail, while pointing out that the convenience of each point in the program, and the way it is to be effected, must always be judged in relation to the indispensable premise: European unity, we would like to emphasise the following aspects:

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

b) The characteristics private property and the right of succession had in the past permitted the accumulation in the rich hands of a few, privileged members of society. In a revolutionary crisis it would be properly distributed in an egalitarian manner, in order to eliminate the parasitic classes and to give the workers the means of production that they need, so as to improve their economic conditions and let them reach greater independence. We can this way think of an agrarian reform by distributing the lands directly to farmers, the number of land-owners is going to increase enormously and an industrial reform which would extend workers' ownership in non-nationalised sectors, through co-operative management, employee profit-sharing. etc.

c) Young people are to be assisted with all the necessary provisions in order to reduce the gap between the starting positions in the long struggle ahead of them. In particular, State schools ought to offer the effective possibility of continuing their studies up to the highest level to the best students not only to the wealthy ones; and in each branch of study, trade schools, semi-professional schools as well as in the liberal arts and sciences, it should prepare a number of students corresponding to the market demand, so that the average salaries are about the same for all the professional categories, even though within each category there may be differences, depending upon individual capacities.

d) The almost unlimited potentiality of mass production of essential goods thanks to modern technology, will allow everyone to be guaranteed, at relatively low social cost, food, lodging, clothing and that minimum of comfort needed to preserve a sense of human dignity. Human solidarity towards those who succumb in the economic battle ought not, therefore, be shown with the same humiliating forms of charity that produce the very same evils they vainly attempt to remedy: rather it ought to take a series of measures which unconditionally guarantee a decent standard of living for everyone, without lessening the stimulus to work and to save. In this situation, no one would any longer be forced by misery to accept unfair work contracts.

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

These are the changes needed to create a broad group of citizens interested in the new order and willing to struggle for its preservation, and to give the political life the solid stamp of liberty based on a strong sense of social solidarity. Based on these principles political liberties can truly have not only a formal meaning, but a real meaning for everybody, since that mass of citizens will be independent, and will be sufficiently informed as to be able to exert continuous and efficacious control over the governing class.

It would be superfluous to dwell at length on the constitutional institutions; in fact not being able to foresee the conditions in which they will be drawn up and will have to regulate, we could do more than repeat what has already been said – the need for representative bodies, the formation of the law, the independence of the magistracy that will be substitute the present one in order to apply impartially the laws handed down by higher authorities and the freedom of the press and of assembly so that public opinion can be enlightened and all citizens can effectively participate in the life of the State. Only two questions demand further and deeper definition because of their particular importance for our country in this moment: the relationship between Church and State; the quality of political representation.

a) The Treaty, which concluded the Vatican's alliance with the Fascism in Italy must absolutely be abolished in order to assert the purely lay character of the State and determine the unequivocal supremacy of the State in civil matters. All religious faiths are to be equally respected, but the State must no longer strike the balance of religions.

b) The house of cards that Fascism built with its corporativism will collapse together with the other aspects of the totalitarian State. There are those who hold that material for the new constitutional order can be salvaged from this wreck. We do not agree this. In totalitarian States, the corporative chambers are the crowning hoax of police control over the workers. Even if the corporative chambers were a sincere expression of the will of the various categories of producers, the representative bodies of the various professional categories could never be qualified to handle questions of general policy. In more specifically economic matters, they would become organs for the accumulation of power and privilege among the categories having stronger union representation. The unions will

have broad collaboration functions with State organs which are appointed to resolve those problems directly related to these categories, but it is absolutely excluded that they will be given any legislative power, since this would create a kind of feudal anarchy in the economic life of the country, leading to a renewed political despotism. Many of those who ingenuously were attracted by the myth of corporativism, can and must be attracted by the task of renewing structures. But they must realise the absurdity of the solution they might vaguely desire. Corporativism can only be concretely expressed in the form given by totalitarian States: that is to regiment the workers beneath leaders who might controlled every movement in the interests of the ruling class.

The revolutionary party cannot be amateurishly organised at the fixed moment. It must form at least its central political philosophy since now, its leaders and directors, the primary actions it will undergo. It must not represent a heterogeneous mass of tendencies, united merely negatively and temporarily, that is, united by their anti-Fascist past and the active expectation of the fall of the totalitarian regime, regime all ready to go their separate ways once this goal has been reached. The revolutionary party knows that only at this point its real work will begin. It must therefore be made up of men who are in agreement on the basic future problems.

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

While overlooking no occasion any sector in which to spread its cause, it must turn first and foremost to those environments which are the most important ones as centres for the circulation of ideas and the recruiting of unbending determined men; primarily towards the two social groups which are the most sensitive to the current situation and decisive for tomorrow's circumstances, that is, the working class the intellectuals. The former is the one that least submitted to the totalitarian rod and that will most readily reorganise its ranks. The intellectuals, particularly the younger among them, are those who feel most spiritually suffocated and repulsed with the current despotism. Other classes will gradually be drawn into the movement.

Any movement which fails its duty to ally these forces, is condemned to sterility. In fact a movement made up only of intellectuals will not have the strength it needs to overwhelm reactionary resistance, it will distrust and be distrusted by the working class; and even though it is animated by democratic sentiments, it will be prone to losing its hold while facing the difficulties, in the mobilisation of all other classes against the workers, and the result will be the threatened restoration of Fascism. If, instead, the movement is backed only by the proletariat, it will be deprived of the clarity of thought which only the intellectual can give, and which is needed in order to define new paths and new duties; it will remain a prisoner of the former classism, it will consider everyone as a potential enemy, and will slither towards the doctrinaire Communist solution.

## The Ventotene Manifesto

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

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

The moment has arrived to know how to discard old onerous burdens, how to be ready for the new changes that is coming and that will be so different from what we expected; to put aside the inept among the old, and create new energies among the young. Today those who have perceived the reasons for the present crisis in European civilisation are seeking each other, and are trying to plan future. In fact they are gathering the inheritance left by all those movements which worked to raise and enlighten humanity, and which failed because of their incapability to understand the purpose to be achieved or the ways how to achieve it.

The road to follow is neither easy nor safe. But it must be pursued and it will be.