LABOUR AND NATION-BUILDING IN ITALY, 1918-1950: MASS PARTIES AND THE DEMOCRATIC STATE[1].

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1. Labour and Nation in Italy. Premises.

Italian scholars have rarely debated 'nation-building' as a proper issue.[2] Nevertheless, Italian historiography has always explored this national issue, since it was identified with the unitarian monarchical state built in 1860. One could recall Gioacchino Volpe and his vision of 'Italia in cammino', meaning the gradual integration of masses in the originally oligarchic national state, carried out by the monarchy and, overall, by the fascist regime. Or, we could consider Gramsci's reflections about the 'passive revolution,' focusing on marginalization of popular classes, labourers and peasants during the period of national unification between 1859 and 1860 and, moreover, in the political and institutional life of the liberal state. By the first postwar period, many Italian intellectuals broadly agreed with such a vision. In fact, many non-marxist intellectuals, such as left-wing liberals and radicals, also considered the Italian national state to be strictly conservative and oligarchic, in spite of its parliamentary institutions.[3]

For quite some time, labour historians have debated the extent to which the Italian labour movement was a descendant or heir of the left wing risorgimental democrats. More recently, the nexus between the labour mo-

[1]   Relazione presentata al 28° seminario dell'Internationale Tagung der Historikerinnen und Historikeren der Arbeiterbewegung (Linz, 14-17 settembre 1993), nell'ambito del dibattito su "Labour and 'Nation-building' - the contribution of Labour to the 'nationalization of the masses'", uno degli argomenti in cui era articolato il tema generale del seminario, dedicato a "Labour movement and national identity".

[2]   Some recent and interesting exceptions are Raffaele Romanelli, *Il comando impossibile. Stato e società nell'Italia liberale* (Bologna, 1988); Silvio Lanaro, L'Italia nuova. Identità e sviluppo 1961-1988 (Torino, 1988), and Bruno Tobia, *Una patria per gli italiani. Spazi, itinerari, monumenti nell'Italia unita (1870-1900)* (Bari, 1991).

[3]   Gioacchino Volpe, *L'Italia in cammino. L'ultimo cinquantennio* (Milano, 1927); Adolfo Omodeo, *L'età del risorgimento* (Messina, 1931, 2. enl. ed.); Piero Gobetti, *Risorgimento senza eroi e altri scritti storici*, ed. Franco Venturi (Torino, 1976; 1ed.: 1926); Antonio Gramsci, *Il Risorgimento* (Torino, 1949) and *Prison Notebooks* (New York, 1991-).

vement and the nation has been debated in connection with popular attitudes during the First World War.[4]

I could give many other examples. But, before I move on to a more systematic review of the theme, a preliminary warning is in order. It concerns the fact that in Italy, unlike in Germany, Great Britain and France, 'nation-building' is hardly to be considered a cumulative process, whose quantitative and qualitative levels can be easily identified. In the scholarly world, nation-building is considered a process on the way to modernization.[5] Indeed, I prefer a looser meaning and here I am going to define nation-building as the coalescence of different social groups or classes in a unitarian community and under some unitarian cultural and political unity, whose institutional and political system grew out of state-building. Because of that, we must consider how many different and opposing political and social groups succeeded in creating a national identity and a state. This was a victory achieved only after much struggle and the outcome was not guaranteed.

I intend to focus on the two postwar periods, when the interaction between political mobilization and efforts to set up a national community and a unitarian state was more intense and intelligible. My purpose, therefore, is to consider the role of the organized labour movement and its parties in constituting a national identity and a democratic state, against the background of Italy's social conditions.

Since I deal with the contribution of Labour to the 'nationalization of the mass', I would like to specify only that internal regional differences did not serve as decisive factors in developing a national identity: until the 1950s Italy was a 'labour exporting' country and there wasn't any massive internal migration or strong competition among workers from different areas; therefore ethnic- or regional-based conflicts were scarcely relevant at home and the national issue was much more conditioned by sharp social

4.   Renato Monteleone, *Lettere al re. 1914-1918* (Roma, 1973); Roberto Vivarelli, *Il fallimento del liberalismo. Studi sulle origini del fascismo* (Bologna, 1981) and *Storia delle origini del fascismo. L'Italia dalla grande guerra alla marcia su Roma*, 2 vs. (Bologna, 1991); *Stato e classe operaia in Italia durante la prima guerra mondiale*, ed. Giovanna Procacci (Milano, 1983); *La grande guerra: esperienza, memoria, immagini*, eds. Diego Leoni, Camillo Zadra (Bologna, 1986).

5.   Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-building and Citinzenship. Studies of our Changing Social Order* (New York-London-Sidney, 1964). However, I agree with Bendix's statement (Chap. 1) that nation-building results in the legitimation of a nation-wide political order.

and/or geographical cleavages. As a matter of fact, 'nation-building' figured in the historical problem of legitimation both of the state government and of the political system which was caused more by social and local stratifications and opposing interests rather than by ethnic or national minority issues.

According to Ernest Gellner,[6] nationalism affirms that political and national unity should be congruent, or that each nation should be a proper state and vice versa. However, such a narrow, yet general, definition reduces nationalism to the right-wing nationalist movements. What concerns us is that, historically, 'nation' and 'state' had social and political meanings and that, because of these meanings, several conflicts and disputes arose in which labour movements were deeply involved.

In Italy, the monarchy achieved national unity before any organized labour movement had arisen. For this reason, it was not necessary for the Italian labour movement to select a priority between the national question or the social and political questions. In fact, the national and social questions were strikingly close to each other, since the monarchist legitimacy of the prefascist state led to a mutual separation between the state and the labour movement, which was considered 'antisystemic', a potential threath to the *status quo*.[7] Despite that, compared to the German movement, Italian labour appeared relatively more integrated, by participating in local governments and by organizing different kinds of mutual associations. Because the Italian ruling classes were unable actively to integrate the lower classes, the labour movement can be considered both relatively integrated - mostly on a local level - and 'antisystemic'. In reality, it was a scanty integration, which was exposed during the First World War when Italian socialists chose 'neither to support nor to sabotage.' As the post-war era demonstrated, this attempt to ignore the 'bourgeois state' was shortlived.

The attitude toward the war confirms also, that it would be incorrect to speak of 'negative integration,' with reference to Italian labour[8]. In fact, that polemical definition was rarely used. We must also remember that in the decade before the war many left-wing syndicalists ('revolutionary syn-

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6.   Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Ithaca-London, 1983), p. 1.

7.   Paolo Pombeni, *Introduzione alla storia dei partiti politici* (Bologna, 1985).

8.   For a critic of the idea of 'negative integration', referred to the German labor movement, see Vernon L. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture. Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 3-20.

dicalists' and 'anarcho-syndicalists') had separated from the main labour movement and had shifted toward right-wing nationalism. By then, major disputes had occurred just over the nexus between national and class interest and therefore over the attitude about the 'Lybian war' and, few years later, the First World War: in 1914 the change of Mussolini's attitude to the war - from sabotage to intervention - was at the forefront of this shift, since Mussolini was chief editor of *Avanti!*, the official party newspaper. Some years later, most of these syndicalists would organize the fascist unions.[9] Since then, italian trade unions have carefully distinguished between their national role - trying to unify the highly differentiated requests of the working-people - and the identification with the 'nation' or the nationalist appeal, distinctive of the corporative ideology of fascism.

As a starting point, we can reconsider Hobsbawm's considerations about class consciousness and national identity: only in a right-wing perspective are 'nation' and 'class' readily separable, because when we accept - as we do - that class consciousness had a civic-national dimension and that ethnic or civic-national consciousness had social dimensions, we can understand how class and national identity could interact. Therefore, we can agree with Hobsbawm's remark that radicalization of the working classes in post-war Europe reinforced their potential national consciousness and that, in the following years, antifascist nationalism arose in the context of an international ideological civil war.[10]

On the contrary, Gellner's thesis, which proposes that nationalism built nations by using and homogenising pre-existing materials, has to be rejected.[11] In fact, national identity and unity were more likely to develop out of interactions of opposing social groups and homogenization seems to have been an effect of the spreading of an industrial economy more than of any political authority's effort. From this point of view, analysing the contribution of the labour movement to the building of national unity is logical.

[9.] Alceo Riosa, *Il sindacalismo rivoluzionario in Italia e la lotta politica del Partito socialista nell'età giolittiana* (Bari, 1976); Francesco Perfetti, *Dal sindacalismo rivouzionario al corporativismo* (Roma, 1985); Zeev Sternhell, *Naissance de l'ideologie fasciste* (Paris, 1989).

[10.] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1870. Programme, myth, reality* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 145-147.

[11.] Gellner, *Nations*, pp. 55-56.

2. The postwar crisis

By the end of World War One, the Italian socialist movement was relatively consolidated, having been rooted deeply in central and northern regions for nearly thirty years. Its social base was among industrial workers, urban craftsmen and lower middle classes, but the stronghold of its support was in the countryside. Here, among day and seasonal labourers, peasants[12] and sharecroppers of the Po Valley and of the central regions, the labour movement had its more traditional and, after the war, large new constituency. However, its presence in southern regions was weaker, even if the party and the unions were strong enough in Sicily, Apulia and near Naples. In fact, the labour movement was relatively well organized in the major industrial northern towns and, without question, the labour organization, its unions, cooperatives and other mutual associations composed a large and articulate social network in many villages and small and middle agrarian towns, so that they had already gained a strong influence on a local and regional scale. Such an organization was preeminently defensive, even if it was not strictly class-based, because of the large internal differentiation among the working class. Reliable as an instrument of social self-organization, it was still politically feeble, unable to effect positively national politics.[13] Nevertheless, due to its organization and political culture, the Italian socialist party (PSI) can be considered a modern mass party.[14]

Generally, there is no doubt that the PSI and the labour movement as a whole were deeply involved - as important promoters - in building a nation-wide political system. Besides their engagement in many local governments (often allied with radicals and left democrats, especially in

[12]. In Italy, there was a huge number of small land-owners, who could hardly substain their families working their land by themselves, so that, often, they or their relatives also worked as day or seasonal wage-workers. The socialist movement tried to organised these particular 'land-labourers', often in competition with the catholic organizations.

[13]. Maurizio Degl'Innocenti, *Geografia e istituzioni del socialismo italiano* (Napoli, 1983) and idem*, Cittadini e rurali nell'Emilia Romagna fra '800 e '900* (Milano, 1990) . For a useful survey, see John A. Davies, *Socialism and The Working Classes in Italy Before 1914*, in *Labour and Socialist Movements in Europe Before 1914*, ed. Dick Geary (Oxford, 1989); James E. Miller, From Elite to Mass Politics. Italian Socialism in the Giolittian Era, 1900-1914 (Kent, 1990).

[14]. Maurizio Ridolfi, *Il Psi e la nascita del partito di massa, 1892-1922* (Bari, 1992).

important cities like Milan, Rome and Bologna),[15] the PSI partecipated in national elections and received a growing electoral support, which had been enhanced by the electoral law of 1912 which allowed for near universal male suffrage. The parliamentary system, however, encountered growing difficulties before and, moreover, after the war, because of the weakness of the centre-left area, which should have filled the gap between the traditional conservative notables and the PSI, the only 'mass party' until 1919, when the recently founded catholic *Partito popolare* gained a large following (though less than the socialists).

Prior to the war, the parliamentary system's weakness had already pointed to an increasing splitting of national community, to be divided among those who favored interventionist and neutralist positions toward the war. The socialists also maintained a neutralist position, in part in order to avoid dangerous internal cleavages. It ought to be noted that during the war years, local socialist governments did not support the military effort and refused any patriotic engagement or *union sacrée*, but did demonstrate their effective national involvement by largely providing for common people's daily needs.[16] By this way italian socialists, especially the reformists, tried to emphasized the differences between the true needs of the country - which they cared for - and the war.

As a matter of fact, national political identity and institutions were challenged sharply immediately after the war. A widespread mobilization involved both former military figures (lower middle class officials and private soldiers, who were mostly peasants in civil life) and members of the labouring industrial and rural classes.[17] In an early stage, different social groups mobilized simultaneously and potentially converged on progressive tasks. The labour movement could and in part did serve as the central organizing unit for these groups.

One main stream of the mobilization was in the factories. Historians have focused on this pattern, as it was the core of the Italian communist movement and of Gramsci's reflections. In fact, it is interesting, because it allows a more general consideration of the state and broader perspectives of the reformist-led main industrial union and of the general unions con-

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[15]. *Le sinistre e il governo locale in Europa: dalla fine dell'800 alla seconda guerra mondiale*, ed. M. Degl'Innocenti (Pisa 1984).

[16]. For a major example see Maurizio Punzo, *La giunta Caldara: l'amministrazione comunale di Milano negli anni 1914-1920* (Milano-Roma, 1986).

federation (CGL).[18] Industrial workers' mobilization was a large-scale result of huge increases in industrial production during the war and raised the question of the working classes' social and political power and, especially, the role of trade unions in an industrial society. Since the mobilization did not yield any relevant political effects, it pointed to the difficulties for the industrial union in acquiring the desired national role through the management of labour.[19] Also, it highlighted the party's irresolution which left many crucial decisions to the trade unions and eventually encouraged tendencies toward both a labour (apolitical) party and a communist party, which ultimately led to the division of the PSI. On the other hand, recent research has shown that Italian reformists' programs were technically well conceived, but still politically feeble.[20]

Another main focus of postwar mobilization was in the countryside, in northern as well as central and southern areas. Many different and somewhat confused goals were sought; sharp strikes and fights occurred; unionization and participation amounted to unprecedentedly high rates. In southern areas, the most widespread demand was for land-reform; elsewhere workers supported wage- and work-claims. Because the Italian agriculture was scarcely modernised, such demands challenged owners' control and mirrored the weight of labour on the land. Since the industrial

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[17.] Among local studies, see Giovanni Sabbatucci, *I combattenti nel primo dopoguerra* (Bari, 1974); Simona Colarizi, *Dopoguerra e fascismo in Puglia (1919-1926)* (Bari, 1977); Paul Corner, *Fascism in Ferrara, 1919-1925* (Oxford, 1975); Alice A. Kelikian, *Town and country under Fascism: the transformation of Brescia, 1915-1926* (Oxford-New York, 1986); A. Lyttelton's and P. Corner's essays in *Italy and Gramsci's passive revolution*, ed. John A. Davis (London, 1979); Ivano Granata, *Sindacato e crisi della democrazia. La Camera del lavoro di Milano dallo "splendore" del biennio rosso allo scioglimento (1919-1925)* (Milano, 1986); Frank M. Snowden, *Violence and Great Estates in the South of Italy. Apulia, 1900-1922* (Cambridge, 1986). For a general outline, see Angelo Tasca, *The Rise of Italian Fascism, 1918-1922* (London, 1938); Paolo Farneti, "La crisi della democrazia italiana e l'avvento del fascismo: 1912-1922", *Rivista italiana di scienza politica*, 1, 1975; Giuseppe Maione, *Il biennio rosso. Autonomia e spontaneità operaia nel 1919-1920* (Bologna, 1975).

[18.] *Sindacato e classe operaia nell'età della II Internazionale*, (Firenze, 1983).

[19.] Giuseppe Berta, "Un caso di industrialismo sindacale: la Fiom del primo novecento", in *Sindacato e classe operaia*.

[20.] Sabbatucci, "'Rifare l'Italia': Turati fra dopoguerra e fascismo", in *Filippo Turati e il socialismo europeo*, ed. M. Degl'Innocenti (Napoli, 1985); Giulio Sapelli, *Comunità e mercato. Socialisti, cattolici e "governo economico municipale" agli inizi del XX secolo* (Bologna, 1986); *La cultura delle riforme in Italia fra Otto e Novecento. I Montemartini* (Milano, 1986).

labour market was increasing slowly, the rural labour force still held much importance. Moreover, mobilization in southern Italy had a strong political value, signifying a democratic and organised involvement of the middle classes, until then traditional allies of the land-owners.[21]

Post-war mobilization has been debated for years. In a recent and important study,[22] Roberto Vivarelli noted that most of the economic requests were tolerable, in spite of the extremist (maximalist) slogans. The struggle was such a difficult and violent fight - Vivarelli argued - because historically the Italian countryside was socially and economically underdeveloped and because politically, the socialists, both reformists and maximalists, were utopian-minded and not faithful enough to the democratic parliamentary system. In addition, the ruling classes preferred to maintain traditional social order rather than to bring about reforms which would enlarge the political and social bases of the liberal state. The outcome of this tension was the fascist regime. Although sharply critical of many important aspects of Vivarelli's study, reviewers seem to agree on his main thesis concerning the breakdown of the 'liberal' state and the emergence of fascism in the post-war years as the consequence of the exacerbation and failure to resolve of the long-term cleavages in the national social and institutional framework.[23]

Our perspective is focused on the nexus between socio-economic claims and institutional change and on the labour movement's positive attitude toward integration and/or transformation of the national social and political framework during the post-war crisis.

During the post-war mobilization, historical social and economic cleavages combined with recently sharpened political and ideological conflicts.[24] Indeed, the labour movement and especially the socialist party were unable to suggest reasonable actions or an effective strategy for the mobilization. Nevertheless, they were partly aware of the question and tried to arrange an institutional framework which could allow social and po-

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[21]   Gaetano Salvemini, *Opere, IV. Tomo II. Movimento socialista e questione meridionale*, ed. Gaetano Arfé (Milano, 1963); G. Dorso, *La Rivoluzione Meridionale* (Torino, 1925); L. Del Piano, F. Atzeni, *Combattentismo, autonomismo e fascismo nel pensiero di Camillo Bellieni* (Roma, 1986). See also note 13.

[22]   Vivarelli, *Storia delle origini del fascismo*.

[23]   "La Storia delle origini del fascismo di Roberto Vivarelli: una discussione", *Società e storia*, 55 (1992). On this theme, also see Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy, 1919-1929*, 2ed. (Princeton, 1988).

litical cleavages to be disclosed and managed gradually. The tragic delay between the actual occurence of the mobilization and this attempt provoked sharp social and, later, institutional reactions which were exploited by the fascists.

The PSI - since the Communist Party did not share at all such a perspective - acted by developing its previous attitude toward executive powers: local government rule had been conceived and practised in order to obtain institutional support for socio-economic and mutual organizations of the labour movement.[25] Attitudes toward state government had been much more unclear: while they awaited for the coming evolution of capitalism toward a socialist society, socialists had been divided among those who favored external support for progressive governments and intransigents. However, each law was considered separately and the decision to support or not was conducted on a case-by-case basis. Debates about institutional and electoral reforms remained secondary to other questions, considered more urgent.[26]

Approaching the peace, the socialist movement (party, trade unions and cooperatives) had issued a 'democratic platform,' demanding proportional

[24.] Some rough indications about cleavages can be drawn by considering that in 1921 agriculture contributed to the gross domestic product (GDP) for 34%, industry for 24% and services for 44% and that in 1938 the figures were still 27%, 31% and 44% respectively; the active population in agriculture was 9,962 (thousands) in 1921 and still 8,261 in 1951, respectively 4,349 and 6,920 in industry and 3,456 and 5,026 in services. Moreover, in political elections in 1919 56% of people who had the franchise voted: the PSI gained 32.4% and the catholic PPI 20.4% and 156 and 100 seats respectively (together they controlled the majority of the seats available); on the contrary, the traditional liberals together controlled only 179 seats, compared to about 310 they held before, when catholics had 29 seats and socialists 50. It should also be noted that in southern Italy the PSI received less than 15% or, more often, less than 9% of the popular vote. In 1946, the major parties received in northern Italy respectively 37.3% (DC), 28.5% (PSI) and 22.4% (PCI); in central Italy 30.0% (DC), 17.7% (PSI) and 24.7% (PCI); in southern Italy 35.0% (DC); 10.7% (PSI) and 9.8% (PCI).

[25.] *Le sinistre e il governo locale*; Degl'Innocenti, "Per uno studio del tema delle municipalizzazioni nella politica socialista fino all'avvento del fascismo", in *L'esperienza delle aziende municipalizzate tra economia e società*, ed. Fondazione L. Micheletti (Brescia, 1990); *La municipalizzazione in area padana. Storia ed esperienze a confronto*, eds. A. Berselli, F. Della Peruta, A. Varni (Milano, 1988).

[26.] Brunello Vigezzi, "Giolitti, il giolittismo, il Partito Socialista e il suffragio universale nelle lettere di Filippo Turati e di Anna Kuliscioff 1910-1911", *Annali Feltrinelli*, XIV (1972): 212-219.

representation and list-voting, republican institutions, and other democratic-parliamentary devices.[27] Clearly, the project required a democratic constituency in order to build a mass party-based political system, wherein the labour movement could gain appropriate political importance.

As a matter of fact, the party conference in 1918 rejected the platform and adopted the *massimalisti* tasks of the 'socialist republic' and 'proletarian dictatorship'. Nevertheless, the end of World War One and events throughout Europe reinforced the reformists in calling for a parliamentary and democratic reform, through a real republican constituent assembly, suggested by Modigliani and Treves, or in a simpler and realistic parliamentary way, as proposed by Turati.[28] Challenged by an effective turning point, the labour movement deliberately confronted state-building. By proclaiming support for full political citizenship, labour, perhaps for the first time, formulated its own proposal about the question.

3. Facing the facism

By no means was this a definitive outcome, as irresolutions in facing fascism demonstrated. Here, I cannot debate whether or not socialists should or could have openly supported any governments opposed to the fascists. But I must emphasize that the Italian ruling class intended to direct Mussolini's party against the increasing menace of catholic and socialist mass parties. Moreover, the catholics did not intend to form a government coalition with the socialists. Most of the left-wing socialists took no interest - or did it too late - in parliamentary institutions and tragically underestimated fascism, believing it to be a simple variation of the 'capitalistic state.' Early on, reformists were aware of the fascist menace (fascists looked upon the reformists as their first enemy), but they reacted

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[27] The text was published in *Avanti!* (May 10, 1917). A critical review is in R. Vivarelli, *Il dopoguerra in Italia e l'avvento del fascismo (1918-1922). I: Dalla fine della guerra all'impresa di Fiume* (Napoli, 1967), pp. 303-305.

[28] As an example, see Filippo Turati, "La Repubblica per ridere e la repubblica sul serio", *Critica sociale* (September 1-15, 1918) and "Dobbiamo volere la Costituente?", *Critica sociale* (February 1-15, 1919); Claudio Treves, "L'ora delle istituzioni", ibidem. See Turati, "Per la rappresentanza proporzionale", in *Discorsi Parlamentari* (Roma, 1950). On Modigliani, see Marina Tesoro, *Il ruolo di Modigliani nel socialismo del primo dopoguerra*, in *G.E. Modigliani e il socialismo italiano* (Roma, 1983).

either by defending mostly the socio-economic organizations, following the advice of Modigliani and others, or by continuing - for too long a time - to consider their own direct involvement in the government an untimely hypothesis, like Turati did. Indeed, European socialists continued to discuss such alternatives for many years.

Nevertheless, the trend which socialists, and especially Turati, established was extremely meaningful. Activity in local and parliamentary institutions was no longer believed to be a defensive warranty for the labour movement awaiting socialism, but rather a way to build a new political system based on mass parties, on coalitions as collections of different programs and social classes, on state and local parliaments as the playing field for political conflicts, on majority rule and respect for minorities and on parliamentary government.

Such a change inspired the attitude toward the legislative reform which introduced universal male suffrage and proportional representation (1919)[29] and also sparked off the activity of the socialist parliamentary group,[30] especially concerning the controversy regarding support for any government containing fascists; a debate which finally resulted in another split in the party, in 1922. In choosing to defend the parliamentary system at the cost of dividing the party, many socialists acknowledged - perhaps too late - that the labour movement was already largely integrated and interested in the national state.

The next important stage involved opposition to antidemocratic electoral reform issued by Mussolini's government early in 1923. Most socialists, both reformists and maximalists, were confused and irresolute and undervalued the issue. Filippo Turati alone was aware of the stakes and fought vigilantly to defend proportional representation and, by extension, the institutional role of mass parties and parliamentary control of government.[31] Again during the highly contested elections in 1924 and during the next parliamentary secession ('Aventino'), reformist socialists and the right

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[29].   Simone Neri Serneri, "Regime parlamentare e rappresentanza proporzionale. Turati e il Psu di fronte alla "legge Acerbo"", *Italia Contemporanea*, 168 (1987); Serge Noiret, "Riforma elettorale e crisi dello stato liberale: la 'proporzionale', 1918-19", *Italia contemporanea*, 174 (1989).

[30].   See Turati's letters in F. Turati, Anna Kuliscioff, *Carteggio. V: 1919-1922* (Torino, 1977); the motion of the socialist parliamentary group in *Avanti!* (April 5, 1919) and the others proposed by Modigliani and carried by the group, in *Avanti!* (Novemeber 30, 1919).

wing of maximalist socialists insisted on reclaiming a political system built on actual parliamentary democracy and mass parties. According to them, the development of parties encouraged by proportional representation would necessarily promote parliamentary confrontation between different social classes, stifle prevailing individual or group interests and channel the political debate into clearer programmatical terms. In this way, the state would lose its previous 'bourgeois' character.[32]

In conclusion, the nation was believed to be a compound whole, which should be unified by means of mass parties. Through these, it would be connected to the state, which was supposed to become a reflection and institutional promoter of national unity. In addition, that framework would ideally allow the socialist and labour movement to approach the government and avoid any heightening of dangerous political disputes or an untimely transfer of power. This was a partly evolutionary perspective, because political progress was still considered dependent on social and economic modernization. Also, there was some formalism in the conception of parliamentary institutions' representative liability, therefore majority rule was regarded as the best method through which the labour movement could come to power, since it would presumably obtain majority consent of the working classes, which were considered a majority of voters. For this reason, socialists neglected executive power and believed that collaboration with a parliamentary majority would be sufficient and that the executive should strictly submit to such a coalition.[33]

The socialists' engagement in state-building was still quite defensive. They paid particularly little attention to the extent to which opposed social interests concretely affected the parliamentary regime. Nor did they

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[31.]   Neri Serneri, "Regime parlamentare". For significant articles, see Turati, "Per la rappresentanza proporzionale", speech in front of the 'Camera' (March 6,1919), collected in Turati, *Discorsi parlamentari*, and "Il fascismo e la riforma elettorale politica", speech in front of the 'Camera' (July 15, 1923), published in *Critica Sociale* (July 16-31, 1923), and cfr. "Petizione" (Associazione Proporzionalista Milanese, 1923), reprinted in G. Micheli, L. Degli Occhi, *Come eleggere la Costituente?* (Como, 1945). As an example, also see Luigi Basso, "La riforma elettorale. La proporzionale e la solidarietà di governo" and "Ancora sulla riforma elettorale. Il peso della proporzionale", *La Giustizia* (January 5 and February 2, 1923); Camillo Prampolini, "Democrazia e dittatura?", *La Giustizia* (February 6,1923); Adelchi Baratono, "Democrazia e storia", *La giustizia* (February 8, 1923).

[32.]   For a wider treatment of this argument, see S. Neri Serneri, *Democrazia e stato. L'antifascismo liberaldemocratico e socialista dal 1923 al 1933* (Milano 1989), pp. 116-192.

expand on the means and stages necessary for a democratic transition toward socialism or actually attempt to apply the watchword of a 'democratic economics,' about which other European - primarily German and Austrian - socialists debated at the time.[34] As a notable exception, Giacomo Matteotti seemed to be quite aware of how parliamentary democracy was endangered as much by the authoritarian purposes of fascism as by the shifts in the traditional settlement of powers to the advantage of the executive and the bureaucracy, which had restricted parliament from controlling and addressing the government.[35]

Facing the fascism, the Italian socialist movement began to transform its view of nation and state from one envisioning a forced cooperation of opposing social classes - and, therefore, from simply seeking political guarantees - toward a pluralistic perspective of both nation and state as frameworks of a democratic and progressive rebuilding of social order. As rhetorically proclaimed in the political declaration of the PSLI - the reformist socialist party in 1925 - the state should be conceived "an outcome, a synthesis: individuals' existence brings to it, does not come from it, because individuals' rights are in themselves. The state does not create, but only defines them and there lies its sovereignity [...], that is to take care and warrant of any self government, which it [the state] conciliates with harmony and symbiosis."[36]

4. Civil war, fascism and nation

33.　See note 26 and also A. Baratono, "Liberalismo e liberismo", *La Giustizia* (March 31, 1923), Claudio Treves, "Al potere!", *Critica sociale* (January 16-31, 1920), and "Parlamento e Rivoluzione", *Critica sociale*, (August 16-31, 1920), and "I tre gangli dello stato democratico", *Critica sociale* (June 16-30, 1923) and "L'equivoco dei liberali" *Critica sociale* (October 1-15, 1924); cfr. A. Casali, *Socialismo e internazionalismo nella storia d'Italia. Claudio Treves, 1869-1933* (Napoli, 1985) pp. 93-108. See also Giuseppe E. Modigliani, *Per la rappresentanza proporzionale* (Milano, 1919).

34.　Neri Serneri, *Democrazia e stato.*

35.　See Matteotti's report on the law proposal "Delega di pieni poteri al governo del Re per il riordino del sistema tributario e della pubblica amministrazione" (November 23, 1923), now collected in Matteotti, *Discorsi Parlamentari*, vol. 3 (Roma, 1970).

36.　*Giustizia* (October 31, 1926) and Psli, *Dichiarazione Programmatica* ([Roma], 1926).

By 1926, such declarations had no connection with a historical reality. Fascism had triumphed. It broke down the nation-building process or, at least, forcefully interrupted the process as it had occurred up until that time. Fascism violently disrupted the mass parties and impeded the labour movement's organization, focusing on these groups because they were among the most important political subjects in industrial society. Meanwhile, fascism rebuilt the 'liberal' state's framework in an authoritarian way. Through all this, national unity characterized by a civil coexistence was forcefully demolished and fascism reclaimed, first as a political party then as a regime, a monopoly of national legitimacy. This new monopoly was constructed upon a polarity which divided the interventionist-nationalist and all opposition. These opponents - catholics, democrats and labour - were declared *antinazionali*, out of, or against, the nation.

Indeed, fascism represented a break with the traditional political system, primarily in the ideological sphere.[37] Historically, fascism introduced essential changes to the previous political and institutional framework, despite the connections between the liberal state's crisis and the origins of the dictatorship.[38]

The labour movement considered the defeat by the fascism to be a historical turning-point. A long-standing experience seemed to have come to a conclusion - and it really did. Italian communists built their political identity with a contrast to the supposed failures of that experience; reformists themselves regarded fascism as a direct outcome of the war, which had abruptly interrupted the gradual rise of the working classes by extending to social conflicts that breakdown of civil coexistence which was already experienced among states during the World War.[39]

Younger socialists felt that fascism was more like a 'civil war', an expression which signified a breakaway within the nation, even though they did

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[37]   Pier Giorgio Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo. Miti, credenze e valori nella stabilizzazionedel regime* (Bologna, 1985); Emilio Gentile, *Le orgini dell'ideologia fascista (1918-1925)* (Bari, 1975); idem, *Il mito dello stato nuovo dall'antigiolittismo al fascismo* (Bari, 1982); idem, Il culto del littorio. La sacralizzazione della politica nell'Italia fascista (Bari, 1993); Sternhell, *Naissance de l'ideologie fasciste.*

[38]   Alberto Aquarone, *L'organizzazione dello stato totalitario* (Torino, 1965); Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power*; R. Vivarelli, "Interpretations of Origins of Fascism", *Journal of Modern History*, 63, 1 (March 1991) and *Il fallimento del liberalismo.* For a less accentuative view see Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista. I La conquista del potere (1921-1925), II. L'organizzazione dello stato fascista (1925-1929)* (Torino, 1966-1968).

not openly use this concept. It is significant that by attributing the blame for fascism to the 'capitalistic bourgeoisie,' socialists implicitly charged the bourgeoisie with having destroyed the social coexistence or the national community and, by extension, they considered themselves loyal to the nation. The 'civil war' argument was widespread throughout European socialism, especially among its left wing. Pietro Nenni, in particular, focused his own analysis of fascism in Italy and in Europe and his political strategy during the interwar period on the notion of 'civil war.'[40] Regardless of how much the 'civil war perspective' supported radical opposition or alliances against fascism, it should be stressed that through such expression socialists presented themselves as rebuilders of the national community which had been destroyed by fascism's 'civil war.'

By the 1930s, the communist party had also begun to face the national question positively. In applying the 'popular front' watchword, appeals for national unity showed - with a strong and sometimes excessive emphasis - that the 'nation' was going to be an important issue in the communist strategy. Indeed, the PCI then initiated a gradual but deep political transformation, which was completed mostly during the antifascist resistance and focused just on the national role that the communists intended to fulfill.[41]

Some historians portray fascism as a deliberate and successful stage in nation- and state-building,[42] identifying it with increasing levels of modernization. Here, we cannot debate the real meaning of fascist 'moderniza-

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39.   See III. Kongress der Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Internationale. Italienische Delegation, *Referat ueber den Faschismus* (Bruessel, 1928) pp. 1-7, partially reprinted in *La Libertà* (September 2, 1928); F. Turati, *Ciò che l'Italia insegna*, a lecture given in April 1928 (Parigi, 1933), and his speech at the 3rd Conference of IOS in Bruxelles, on August 7, 1928, published in *La Libertà* (August 19, 1928) and both collected in *Le vie del socialismo*, ed. Gaetano Arfè (Napoli, 1966).

40.   Pietro Nenni, *La lutte de classes en Italie* (Paris, 1930), which enlarged his previous *Storia di quattro anni* (Milano, 1927). Note also that Nenni entitled another book, which highlighted the 'civil war' in postwar Italy, *Six ans de guerre civile en Italie* (Paris, 1930). See also Nenni, "Trotski, il fascismo italiano, il fascismo tedesco", *Nuovo Avanti!* (March 12, 1932), also published in *Die Gesellschaft* (April, 1932) and entitled "Trotzki und der Faschismus. Reformismus, Kommunismus und die italienische Erfahrung". In general, see Neri Serneri, *Democrazia e stato*, pp. 281-307; Leonardo Rapone, "Il Partito socialista italiano fra Pietro Nenni e Angelo Tasca", in "L'Internazionale operaia e socialista tra le due guerre", ed. Enzo Collotti, *Annali della Fondazione G.G. Feltrinelli*, XXIII (1983-1984).

41.   An overview in Paolo Spriano, *Storia del partito comunista italiano. III. I fronti popolari, Stalin, la guerra* (Torino, 1970).

tion'[43] and we can only briefly concern ourselves with the kind of 'nationalization of the masses' fascism did realise. I don't mind engaging in the *querelle* raised by De Felice[44] about popular consent for the regime, because debating the extent to which a dictatorship gains passive consent is not useful. I would rather focus on the regime's policies aimed at reducing social and political cleavages and increasing political sociability. In this area, research on the working-classes[45] or the 'welfare' system[46] points out how fascism scarcely improved social life and working conditions: its policies had scanty effects and resulted mostly in creating bureaucratic corporations. They were neither original nor specific, because they usually developed preexisting projects and prosecuted them mostly to the benefit of the middle classes. Indeed, something resembling a 'welfare state' was built in Italy only after the Second World War. It is also questionable whether or not the 'dopolavoro' - an organization charged with facilitating working people's recreation during free time and frequently cited as an example of fascist attempts to integrate labourers into the regime - really succeeded in it or not.[47] While waiting for the forthcoming essay on the fascist party which Emilio Gentile is attending to,[48] local studies on fascism[49] as well as on fascism'organization of woman[50] suggest as well that the fascist party struggled with an unresolvable tension between being a mass organization and a bureaucratic-authoritarian one. This quickly erased any potentiality and ended its functions of improving political sociability and

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[42]   Very assertive in presenting the fascist regime as a successful modernization was A.J. Gregor, *Italian fascism and developmental Dictatorship* (Princeton, 1979). Even if without deliberate reference to sociological theories, a mild positive interpretation of fascism as an agent of modernization is also De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce. I. Gli anni del consenso (1919-1930), II. Lo stato totalitario (1936-1940)* (Torino, 1974-1981).

[43]   A useful review is Tim Mason, "Italy and Modernization: A Montage", *History Workshop*, 25 (Spring, 1988).

[44]   Above all in *Mussolini il Duce*.

[45]   The most important research is "La classe operaia durante il fascismo", ed. Giulio Sapelli, *Annali della Fondazione Feltrinelli* XX (1979-1980).

[46]   Domenico Preti, *La modernizzazione corporativa, 1922-1940: economia, salute pubblica, istituzioni e professioni sanitarie* (Milano, 1987); Maurizio Ferrera, "Italy", in *Growth to limits. The Western European welfare states since World War II*, ed. Peter Flora (Berlin, New York, 1986-87), vol. 2.

[47]   Victoria De Grazia, *The culture of consent: mass organization of leisure in fascist Italy* (Cambridge-New York 1981).

of selecting new ruling élites, especially in the 1930s. Indeed, the fascist party could not be considered an effective mass party.

Fascism supported the social improvement and political integration of the white collar and intellectual middle classes,[51] but mostly it forced a corporatist sharing of nation-building in order to gain a specific consent from white collar workers employed by the government and in public administration or in public enterprises. Moreover, large, historical cleavages - between cities and countryside or northern and southern Italy - were not resolved at all.[52] In fact, fascist nationalism does not seem to have promoted social and cultural homogenization at all, in contrast to the general definition of 'nationalism' espoused by Gellner, who argues that nationalism signifies the need for homogenization required by industrial societies.[53] Mostly, fascists imposed a homogenization designed chiefly to strengthen the ruling elite as well as social and interest groups which supported them. Homogenization rarely aimed to facilitate an impending modernization, rather it was designed to face or, indeed, control it.

[48.] Still now is available Emilio Gentile, *Storia del partito fascista. I: 1919-1922: movimento e milizia* (Bari, 1990) and his introductory essays "The Problem of the Party in Italian Fascism"*, Journal of Contemporary history,* 19 (1984): 251-274; "La natura e la storia del PNF nelle interpretazioni dei contemporanei e degli storici", *Storia contemporanea,* 19, 2 (April 1984): 521-607, and "Partito, Stato e Duce nella mitologia e nella organizzazione del fascismo", in *Fascismo e nazionalsocialismo,* eds. Karl Bracher, Leo Valiani (Bologna, 1986).

[49.] See for example, *Il Pnf in Emilia-Romagna. Personale politico, quadri sindacali, cooperazione,* eds. M.Degl'Innocenti, P.Pombeni, A.Roveri (Milano, 1988); the special number about Lombardia during fascism, in *Storia in Lombardia,* 1989, 1-2; Paolo Varvaro, *Potere e società a Napoli* (Palermo, 1990). Also see Guido Quazza et al., *Storiografia e fascismo* (Milano, 1985), with a large bibliography.

[50.] V. De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women. Italy 1922-1945* (Berkeley-New York, 1992), p. 269-270.

[51.] A. Lyttelton, "Fascismo e antimodernismo", in *I limiti della democrazia. Autoritarismo e democrazia nella società moderna,* eds. R. Scartezzini, G. Germani, R. Gritti (Napoli, 1987) p. 161, and Mariuccia Salvati, *Il regime e gli impiegati. La nazionalizzazione piccolo-borghese nel ventennio fascista* (Roma and Bari, 1992).

[52.] See *L'economia italiana nel periodo fascista,* eds. G.Toniolo and P.Ciocca (Bologna, 1976) and, for example, *Campagne e movimento contadino nel mezzogiorno d'Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi* (Bari, 1979).

[53.] Gellner, *Nations,* p. 45-46.

5. After 1943: fighting for democracy

In March, 1943, unexpected factory strikes - without question the most important in twenty years - broke out in Turin, clearly demonstrating the extent to which the dictatorship was lacking social control and consent. June brought the landing of allied military forces in Sicily and in July an attempt at internal political change through dismissal of Mussolini proved to be the downfall of the regime.

The inevitable outcome of fascist authoritarian politics had been war. These politics failed and fascist authoritarianism proved incapable of allowing a change of leadership. Mussolini's dismissal caused the breakdown of the dictatorship because the problem was not one of leadership but of exhausted policies.

In 1943, the state-building question was again prominent, after the fascist regime had died like the 'liberal' state before it. Nation-building was on the agenda also, because of the failure of paternalistic-authoritarian fascist social policies and since all social classes and groups (both those which had supported the regime - enterpreneurs, Catholic gerarchy, landowners, etc.- and others which had been much more aloof from it) needed to find their place in a new political and social framework.

Indeed, in 1943 the labour movement was very scarcely organized: there were a few small communist groups which lacked effective unity and some socialists, trying to attract former comrades. Nevertheless, the numbers of organizations increased in the succeeding months, both centrally and locally, proving there was much popular support, which needed to be harnessed: at the end of the war, in 1945, the socialist party claimed about 700.000 members and the communist party more than one million.

Nation- and state-building had to be fulfilled in a dramatic and special context. Italy was a battle-ground for regular and irregular armies. The Nazis occupied northern and central regions and supported a neofascist government; both ruled by terror and were opposed by the *partigiani* who fought a widespread guerrilla war, supported by antifascist parties and a large popular following. The monarchy had fled to southern Italy - which was under allied control - and there tried to reestablish a conservative and prefascist-like political system. This was a dangerous undertaking because the monarchy was supported by the Allies, especially Great Britain, and because the democratic and mass parties were still somewhat disorganized,

due to social and economic conditions and attempts by prefascist notables to gain new influence under the monarchy and the Allies.

The labour movement[54] faced the nation and state questions jointly: the unity of the resistance movement was a main goal, prosecuted both on a military level among the guerrilla bands and on a political level within the popular antifascist movement. The aim of unifying the resistance combined the tasks of unifying nationally against Nazis and fascists - the occupants and their servants - and of defending the interests of working-people. Through this combination it was believed that the central interests of the working classes would be advanced to prominence in post-war Italy, through leadership of the antifascist resistance and through providing in the meanwhile premises for institutional and social reforms - outlined as land reform and nationalization of main industrial, financial and service trustes - based on long-standing plans of European socialism.

An important implication of that strategy was the intention of allying with the catholic party - the *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC) -, which it was believed would have organized a large number of working people, mostly in the countryside. Unlike the period after the First World War, the catholics should be encouraged and engaged to establish democracy and workers' government. In June 1944, the early constitution of a syndical federation which gathered together all unions without regard to religious or political party affiliation - something which never existed before in Italy - resulted from the unitarian strategy and marked a historical step towards rebuilding a democratic antifascist national identity through support and strict control of the three mass parties.

The unitarian strategy was pursued in both southern and northern Italy. Under Nazi occupation, an antifascist organization had developed during the Winter of 1943 and continued to grow through the following Spring

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54.   Perhaps the best account of the PCI is still P. Spriano, *Storia del partito comunista italiano, V. La Resistenza e il partito nuovo* (Torino, 1975); see also essays collected in *Studi Storici* 31, 1 (March, 1990) and 33, 2 (June, 1993). An introductory essay is David Travis, "Communism and Resistance in Italy, 1943-48", in *Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe, 1939-1948*, ed. Tony Judt (London and New York, 1989). For the socialist party see Ennio Di Nolfo, Giuseppe Muzzi, "La ricostituzione del Psi. Resistenza, Repubblica, Costituente (1943-1948)", in *Storia del socialismo italiano. V. Il secondo dopoguerra (1943-1955)*, ed. G.Sabbatucci (Roma, 1981); Francesca Taddei, *Il socialismo italiano del dopoguerra: correnti ideologiche e scelte politiche (1943-1947)* (Milano, 1984); *Il Partito socialista nella Resistenza. I documenti e la stampa clandestina*, ed. S. Neri Serneri (Pisa, 1988) and S. Neri Serneri, *Socialisti, guerra e resistenza* (forthcoming: Milano, 1994).

until the war ended in April 1945. Its central structures were the National Liberation Committees (CLN), which were constituted in towns and villages and also in major factories, banks, public offices, schools and among professional groups such as teachers and lawyers. Usually the CLN collected one member from each of the five antifascist parties (socialist, communist, catholic, liberal and democratic). This organizational composition accomplished several different functions: 1. it was the basis of antifascist unity 2. it promoted a widespread, continuous political mobilization organized on party bases 3. it legitimated parties as major instruments of political life 4. it constituted a basis for new democratic institutions, especially by portraying parties as connections between society and institutions and by suggesting a largely decentralized, representative and antifascist state order.

The old monarchical state was openly rejected, even if internal and international conditions required that any change in the form of government and any actions taken against the monarchy for supposed complicity with fascism, be postponed until the end of the war. Indeed, in Rome and in southern Italy, the CLNs struggled for quite some time against the monarchy in order to gain control of the government. It should be noted - as a meaningful example of how nation-building was conceived - that none of the parties, not even the socialists who were the most radical on these issues, suggested the creation of another government, autonomously formed by the CLN, to counter against the monarchy. Antifascist parties appeared to share an open-minded view of the national state they intended to build and to agree upon the wide consent it should be based on. They realized that in order to present themselves as a historical alternative they needed to first gain an effective popular legitimacy.

In this long political struggle, the labour movement exploited its deep social roots among the partisans and in the factories - as the general strike in March 1944, the largest in all occupied Europe, demonstrated - in order to lead the antifascist movement, urge the development of local CLNs and many other mass organizations and to deeply modify traditional socio-political balances. All this did not result - as some have argued - in abandoning the working-class. On the contrary, the antifascist movement reinforced itself by combining democratic and class goals, which strengthened both. Indeed, the dividing line within the antifascist movement ran between its left wing (PCI, PSI and the democratic Pd'A) and its mo-

derate and conservative wing as the Bonomi governments (June 1944-June 1945) demonstrated.[55]

6. Mass parties and political system

I do not intend to analyze results of these politics in detail. I merely want to remark that the labour movement contributed heavily to the constitution of a national unity based on a democratic political system. Nor should it be forgotten to what extent their approach to the catholic party favoured the shift of catholics from being fellow-travellers of fascism toward becoming proponents of democracy. This strategy ultimately resulted in the foundation of the republic and in the Constitutional Laws, between 1946 and 1948, despite increasing social and political conflicts. As matter of fact, these conflicts served as confirmations of the nation- and state-building processes as proper[56].

Antifascism was the common basis through which state- and nation-building could be achieved. As a dividing line, antifascism had social, political and institutional meanings: in outline it aimed for a democratic system supported by social reforms and organized through the mass parties, originally created by the labour movement and working-classes in order to undermine the old monarchical and fascist ruling classes.

The labour movement's contribution to nation-building and state-building started around the time of the First World War, but had taken a dramatic turn in 1943-1944. Then, the antifascist resistance, including both the military guerrilla arm and the mobilized common people, offered basic conditions in order to plan and promote social and political changes. As Claudio Pavone has recently suggested,[57] all this required a redefinition and expansion of the national identity. Referring back to the identification

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55.   Documents on the socialist party's activities are found primarily in Carte Nenni (*Archivio Centrale dello Stato*, Rome), Carte Lelio Basso (*Fondazione Basso*, Rome) and in different collections by *Fondazione Turati* (Florence); most documents concerning the PCI are in *Archivio della Fondazione Gramsci* (Rome).

56.   On the point see also Gian Enrico Rusconi, Se cessiamo di essere una nazione. Tra etnodemocrazia e cittadinanza europea (Bologna, 1993), pp. 67 fs., 86, although he underscores the role of the mass parties in promoting a democratic mobilization.

57.   Claudio Pavone, *Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza* (Torino, 1991).

of fascism and 'civil war,' the labour movement reversed references to nation/antination and connected them partly with a class/class-war based ideological context. This resulted in a new ethical and political national identity, whose main values were antifascism, solidarity and democracy and which was founded on the coexistence of various antifascist parties' programs and on the experience of a popular struggle against the Nazis and neo-fascists.

The labour movement's role is also evidenced in the fact that mass parties resolutely contributed to the achievement both of nation-building, in promoting a democratic political sociability, and of state-building, in supporting organization, providing premises for new institutions and ultimately contributing to the stabilization of the parliamentary system.[58] The mass party-based framework permitted the combination of social identity (ideological and class oriented parties), local self government through the territorial and permanent organization and support for the weakest social interests. Moreover, this framework institutionally emphasized the representative function, enforced by the adoption of a proportionally representative electoral system and by the submission of government to parliament, which was also responsible for legislative power. Therefore, government was intended to reflect a social majority expressed through a coalition of different parties. Without question, the major purpose of such a political system was to overcome through nation-wide mass parties, the sharp social, ideological and geographical cleavages which still existed in Italy.

Despite wide use of revolutionary and radical ideologies, the two large labour parties (each of them had gained about 20% of the vote in 1946) were the major promoters in empowering the mass party as the pivot of the democratic system. Catholics were also compelled to build a similar political party, in some degree loosening their connections to ecclesiastical organizations.[59] In southern Italy too, mass parties were organized in most provinces quite quickly and began to undermine traditional notables, who

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[58]   On the role of parties in stabilizing the parliamentary system, see Maurizio Cotta, "The 'centrality' of parliament in a protracted democratic consolidation: the Italian case", in *Parliament and democratic consolidation in Southern Europe: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Turkey*, eds. M.Cotta and U.Liebert (London-New York, 1990).

[59]   Perhaps, the best essay about catholics in the 1940s is still Pietro Scoppola, *La proposta politica di De Gasperi* (Bologna, 1977); but see also Francesco Traniello, *Città dell'uomo. Cattolici, partito e stato nella storia d'Italia* (Bologna, 1990).

had survived even fascism. Significantly, the catholic DC was the largest party overall in southern Italy.[60] In this area, though, a greater contribution to nation-building could be seen in the labour parties' vast support for the peasants' struggles towards land reform. Indeed, by the end of the war and in the years after 1945 the socialist and especially the communist parties made energetic efforts to connect the large mobilization in the southern countryside with the main strategy of the syndicate. Clearly, they were aware that before the onset of fascism the lack of connection between northern and southern working people had heavily undermined the entire labour movement, as Salvemini and Gramsci had highlighted several times. After the Second World War, the labour movement succeeded in unifying northern and southern Italy on a national level. However, this was achieved only by juxtaposing the different political claims. For a long time, an anachronistic fear induced the labour movement not to face the question also on an institutional level, because they believed that any federalism should allow conservative parties to prevail. In conclusion, in the period between 1943 and 1947 and until the 1970s, labour parties were a central element of social and political life in Italy, a loyal and decisive tutor of republican democracy.[61]

A recent trend in political and historical studies aims to suggest that the immoderate power and the connected corruption of the italian parties - higly increased during the last two decades - is an outcome of the constitutional framework built in the 1940s, because the central role of parties should have resulted in reproducing and even increasing the submission of the government and state administrations, which fascism had already brought about. Some scholars argue that a connection could develop just through mass mobilization and the mass party as major elements of political life. Indeed, mass parties would have served as new and exclusive dealers in patronage and clientelism, caring for all needs and inducing fanatical assent among their own members, thereby undermining free relationships between individuals and democratic institutions.[62]

In my opinion, the main thesis of such critics should be rejected. Without question, the mass party as a political organization arose long be-

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[60.]   See documents conserved in *Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero dell'Interno, Dir. Gen. Pubblica sicurezza, 1944-1946*. See also essays in *L'altro dopoguerra. Roma e il sud 1943-1945*, ed. N.Gallerano (Milano, 1985).

[61.]   This refutes the sense of the events emphasized by Pietro Di Loreto, *Togliatti e la 'doppiezza'. Il Pci tra democrazia e insurrezione 1944-1949* (Bologna, 1991).

fore fascism. In Italy, where it developed having learned from both the German and Belgian experiences, labour's mass party was already well-rooted by World War One. Indeed, it preceeded fascism and was followed and imitated by it. Fascism attempted to take the place of labour's mass party and, to a certain degree, its functions. Fascism was the mass party - organizationally resembling the socialist party - of the middle classes, a response to the pressure of mass labour parties, which were endangering their traditional identification with the state.[63] Therefore, the fascist mass party was a special one, targetted against the historical mass parties in order to provide an authoritarian solution to the conflict between the idea of the state as protector of the general interest (indeed of the upper and middle classes' interests) and mass parties, as expressions of class-specific interests.

As for the submission of the administration to parties, until the 1960s it deferred mostly to the DC and was the result of the specific type of 'welfare state' and 'mixed economy' which were practised in Italy. Both the 'welfare state' and 'mixed economy' were determined by the catholic view of combining private enterprises, social assistance and regulatory economic intervention. Moreover, in the first decade following the war the dominant institutional role of parties permitted - in spite of the 'cold war' - an increase in democratic mobilization. After the 1950s, Italy's traditional cleavages and political system underwent a transformation, which heavily undermined traditional ways of political mobilization and communication and changed the role and function of parties.[64]

Finally, it should be pointed out how the role of the labour movement in nation- and state-building suffered from dual party organizations. Al-

[62]   Joseph La Palombara, *Democracy. Italian style* (New Haven-London, 1987), p. 272 fs. Also see Simona Colarizi, *La seconda guerra mondiale e la Repubblica* (Torino, 1984), p. 548; Pietro Scoppola, *La repubblica dei partiti. Profilo storico della democrazia in Italia 1945-1990* (Bologna, 1991), p. 97 fs.; Luciano Cafagna, *La grande slavina. L'Italia verso la crisi della democrazia* (Venezia, 1993), p. 62-64; Aurelio Lepre, Storia della prima repubblica. L'Italia dal 1942 al 1992 (Bologna, 1993), p. 52-59.

[63]   P. Pombeni, "La forma partito del fascismo e del nazismo" in *Fascismo e nazionalismo*, esp. p. 228 fs.; see also idem, Demagogia e tirannide. Uno studio sulla forma partito del fascismo (Bologna, 1984).

[64]   More in S. Neri Serneri, "Sistema dei partiti e democrazia nell'Italia repubblicana", *Italia contemporanea*, 189 (December, 1992): 733-739, a review to Scoppola, *La repubblica dei partiti*.

though their relationships were good enough because of the lengthy collaboration in the antifascist movement since the 1930s, the socialist and communist parties were divided over several political tasks. Socialists were more dedicated and radical about institutional changes, while communists insisted more on alliance with catholics, arguing that political relationships would decide the future of post-fascist Italy.[65] However, perhaps most important was the rivalry in gaining consent and enforcing their own organizations, both during resistance[66] and the following years, when the so called 'succession' took place gradually and the communist party became the leading one also in traditional socialist strongholds.

Differences between the parties were not to be repaired easily. These resulted from the different ways they viewed the Soviet Union and the ways in which they conceived democracy, both within and outside the party, since the socialists felt uncomfortable with the soviet and communist political style. The stricter ideology and organization of the communist party matched its more homogenous, very class-oriented social roots; the socialist party on the other hand, exhibited more internal differencies both in social composition and in ideological tendencies.

The coexistence of two parties resulted in an increasing polarization inside the labour movement. The 'cold war' benefited the communist party, but damaged the labour movement as a whole and narrowed its limited possibilities to control of the government, since it weakened the socialist party.

Since then, the antifascist combination of nation-building and state-building began to loosen.[67] The internal reflection of the 'Cold War' and the sharp social conflicts emphasized the political cleavages until the middle of the 1950s. Social identities and partical membership prevailed and the coalescence of a national identity slowed. The antifascist coalition collapsed as effective legittimation of the government: the communist-led labour movement was pushed into isolation and the PSI was ineffectual. Ruled by

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[65]   See notes 48 and 49 and Donald Sassoon, *The Strategy of the Italian Communist Party. From the Resistance to the Historical Compromise* (New York, 1981).

[66]   S. Neri Serneri, "Dal fascismo alla Repubblica. La politica unitaria durante la Resistenza", *Il Ponte* (May, 1992): 219-235.

[67]   A general account in Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943-1988* (London, 1991). Norberto Bobbio wrote that after 1948 anticommunism was the ideological basis of the ruling majority, see "Lettere sull'azionismo", Il Mulino, 6 (November-December, 1992).

catholics and allied with the West, Italy preserved its institutions. Indeed, the transition to democracy slowed and the political system regained some authoritarian tendencies from fascism in order to fight the labour movement. Since then, Italy has been endangered by dangerous covert actions, which constricted or undermined democracy. Some have even spoken of a dual state, where non-democratic powers controlled the democratic one.[68] There is no doubt that state-building was clearly undermined. At the end of the 1950s, however, an incoming rush economic development and large social transformations deeply changed the perspective of nation-building and of making the democracy working in Italy.

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[68]. Franco De Felice, "Doppia lealtà e doppio Stato", Studi storici, 30, 3 (July-September, 1989).