

# Our English Section

## The Italian Internal Situation

### General Discontent and Opposition

The Italian internal situation was summarized recently as follows: General apathy and indifference, absence of enthusiasm for the war, disappearance of every fascist myth—either nationalistic, imperialistic or corporate, gradual loosening of the fascist political machine which is being replaced by a still small but already tight nazi organization. Discontent is unanimous and deep but there are no signs yet that it may soon be transformed into active opposition.

Even among the young people, who have been brought up in a fascist "atmosphere" there is no trace of enthusiasm for the war. Everyone is convinced by now that war has been started by the Axis with the only purpose of serving German interests and that a German victory would constitute the most serious threat to Italian independence. People say: "Italians fought three wars for national independence, now we are fighting the fourth for national dependence."

#### MUSSOLINI, THE STRATEGIST

The Italian aspect of the war is considered to be Mussolini's personal affair, wanted and directed by him. The general belief is that when the possibility of Italy's intervention was discussed, all the chiefs of the armed forces expressed serious doubts of Italy's ability to carry out a successful campaign. They knew that the general mobilization of September '39 had been a failure and that stocks of war material had been emptied by the Ethiopian and Spanish adventures. The Duce decided on intervention because he was convinced that the war would be over in a few days and he wanted to claim part of the booty of the peace conference. Thousands of men perished in the Alps taking part in a badly prepared offensive which gave no fruits whatsoever except for the unbridgeable chasm it created then between the French and the Italian nations.

The military chiefs, including Teruzzi but excluding the Duke of Aosta who refused to express his opinion, agreed that East Africa could not be held in case of war. It was Mussolini again who was convinced that the British would not fight in Africa and that the occupation of Egypt would open easy communications between Italy and Ethiopia. The direction of the first battle of North Africa is attributed to Mussolini who is accused by the Italian military circles of having ordered the troops to remain in the field, even when it was evident that only a withdrawal could prevent their encirclement and their capitulation.

The two chiefs of Staff, Badoglio and Cavagnari, opposed the Greek adventure, wanted by the trio Ciano-Cavallero-Jacomoni. As no resistance was expected, the troops sent against Greece were inadequate and badly equipped. In March Mussolini went to Albania and directed an offensive which should have been decisive and which on the contrary only achieved the butchery of several regiments.

#### WITHIN THE FASCIST PARTY

There is only a little circle of fascists who sympathize with the Nazis. Farinacci, its leader, is now a permanent resident in Rome and is able to exercise a greater influence over the Party and the administration than when he was kept by Starace in the provinces and had to be satisfied with the position of boss of Cremona. It is no secret that he is working hard to ensure the ducship in case the succession is open. There is considerable friction between the Farinacci group and other elements in the fascist party. It is said that the Secret Police (the institution in the State on which Mussolini's control is most absolute and on which Mussolini's power greatly depends) went so far that last

summer Farinacci was refused the passport he needed for another trip to Germany.

The "moderates" (as they call themselves) are one important group which today is feeling extremely confused and helpless. Belonging to the pre-fascist ruling classes there is little doubt to possess a 100 per cent fascist mentality, but they put their technical ability to the service of the regime. Although mostly spineless there is little doubt that, numerous as they were in the public administrations and in the economic organizations, they exercised at times a restraining influence through their inability, or maybe unwillingness, to carry out completely the will of the small fascist oligarchy which seized power in the nation. They are the people who used to make a distinction between fascism and Mussolini, who found in the corporate State and in national prestige an alibi for their conscience, who talked of normalization, sometimes of the liberalization of fascism. They are the people who professed in private conversations horror for the extremists and who put their hopes on the Crown Prince, on the Duke of Aosta, on Grandi, on Badoglio. But the Crown Prince means nothing in Italy. Aosta, through whom they hoped it would be possible to reach a compromise with the Allies, is dead, Badoglio is interned and Grandi seems to be out of circulation.

#### THE PEOPLE AND THE ALLIES

There is hardly any hatred in Italy against the English or the French. The prisoners are treated as well as can be under the circumstances and are respected by the populace. The news that Italian war prisoners and Italian civilians interned in East Africa are well treated by the British authorities and have been protected against enraged native population has greatly contributed in developing a feeling of sympathy for the English.

According to the development of events the Italian people hope for an Allied victory or fear a nazi one. It is in general believed that the defeat of the Axis will not bring any loss of territory to Italy and that Italy may even receive back her colonial possessions or be granted by the United Nations other territories which could satisfy the economic and demographic needs of the country.

The intervention of the United States in a moment when the British were being successful in Libya had aroused hopes for a quick solution of the war. But the Allied defeats in the Far

East have caused a new wave of depression. One remarkable fact is Italians hardly ever mention the Japanese victories in their conversations. One would say that they are ashamed of being in the eyes of the world partners of the Mikado's military gang.

Talks about a landing by British troops are current in the Peninsula and even more so in Sicily. It is probable that if such a landing were to take place it would get neither active opposition nor active support from the people. They would sit back and see how the fight between the Allies and the German troops stationed in the country would end.

#### THE REGIME CARRIES ON

Many believe that workmen may constitute a centre of resistance and of revolt, as they are already organized in the syndicates. In effect there have been cases of strikes during the last summer and those who came back from Germany at the end of the year brought with them a definite anti-nazi spirit. But cohesion is still lacking. The workmen of Turin and the laborers of Sicily are on the whole in favor of a political change. The same cannot be said of the workmen of Milan who for some obscure reason seem to be adjusted to existing conditions, and of many of the "mezzadri" of central Italy.

Many factors keep the regime going. First of all there are in Italy as elsewhere institutions which fulfill their functions whatever the private opinions of the people concerned. Secondly the few rulers constitute an organized group while the many discontents are individuals devoid of any possibility as yet of getting together and transforming their individual resentments into collective actions. It is the job of the police to see that individuals do not become a group and the OVRA, effectively helped now by a number of Gestapo agents, does its work as well as ever. Thirdly most of those who occupy key positions, political, military or economic, however great their desire for a change, fear that same change and feel that if they do not hang together with Mussolini they risk being hanged separately, or at least losing their positions. Fourthly, there is a genuine fear that a further weakening of Italy's political structure would simply precipitate the annexation of Italy by Germany. There is no confidence yet that the Allied troops would be able to push the Germans north of the Alps. And, besides, German penetration probably already deprives Italians of any freedom of action.

## The Loyalty of Americans Of Italian Origin

United States Senator James M. Mead, of New York, rose on the floor of the Congressional Chamber and asked for unanimous consent to have inserted in the "Record" his remarks containing references to resolutions pledging loyalty on the part of Americans of Italian extraction. The following is his complete text as it is printed in the Congressional Record, in the issue of March 27, on page 3130:

**RESOLUTION OF LOYALTY**  
Immediately after the dastardly attack upon Pearl Harbor numerous resolutions were adopted by fraternal and labor organizations whose membership is composed of Americans of Italian origin. These resolutions are splendid manifestations of the patriotism, loyalty, and wholehearted support of such organizations, as well as its members, to the President and the Government of the United States.

I wish to take this opportunity of summarizing a few of the

very many resolutions which have been brought to my attention in these last few weeks, which I believe are of note to the members of this body.

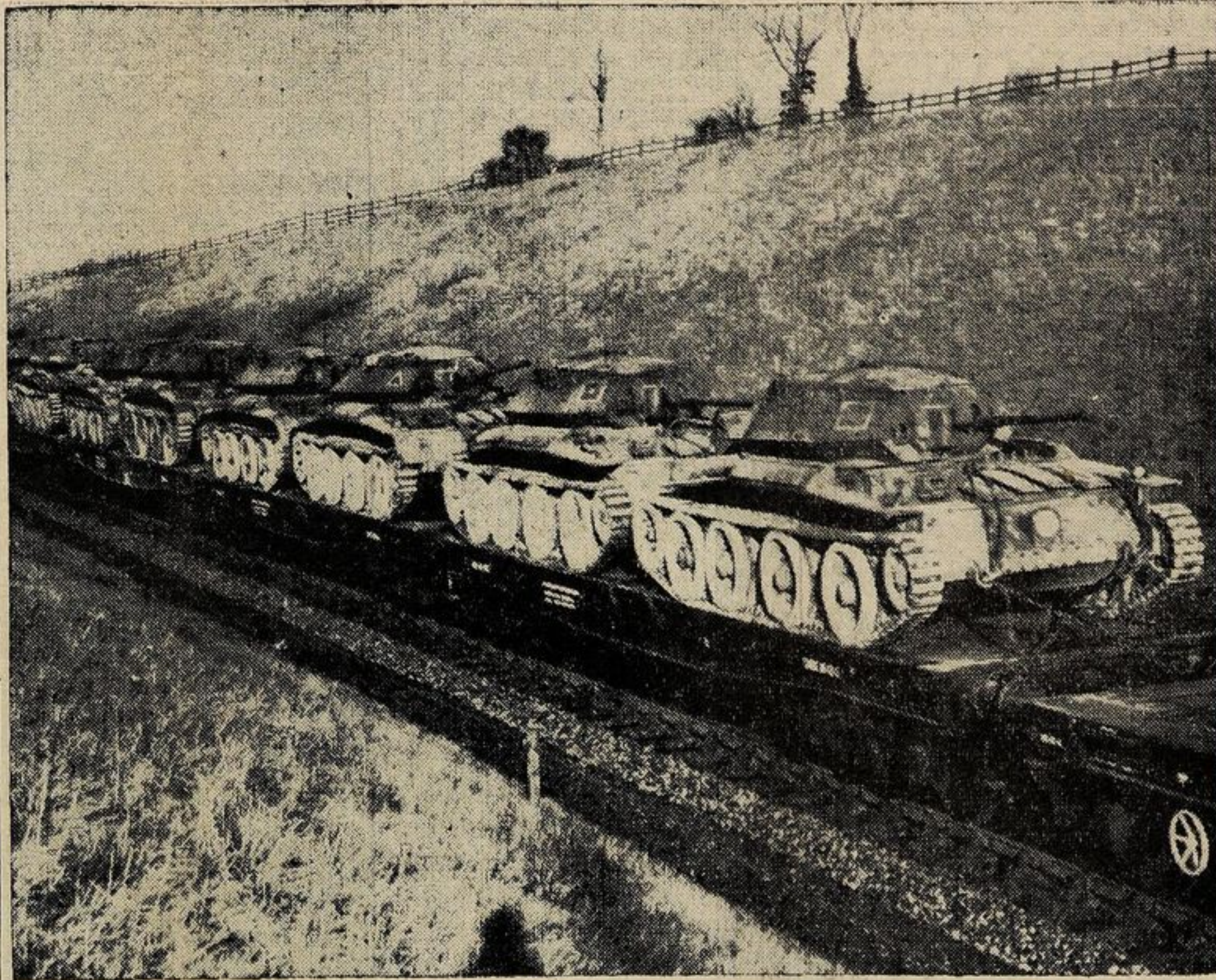
Among the first, the orders, Sons of Italy, through its supreme council meeting in extraordinary session in the city of Philadelphia, cradle of the American liberty, recommended that each of its member lodges subscribe and pledge its available funds for the ultimate purchase of \$10,000,000 worth of Defense Bonds.

In a letter to President Roosevelt all of the executives, editors, administrative staff, and employees of the newspaper Il Progresso Italo-Americano, and Corriere d'America, edited by Gen. Erosio Pope, reaffirmed their loyalty and pledged their fortunes and lives to preserve and secure the United States. By the voluntary pay-roll allotment plan Mr. Pope's industrial and journalistic enterprises have already purchased \$50,000 worth of Defense Bonds.

In addition, all the other Italian-American newspapers are conducting an extensive campaign for the purchase of millions of dollars worth of additional bonds by the various Italian-American organizations throughout the United States.

On February 8 of this year the newspaper Il Progresso Italo-Americano already published the

### British Tanks Bound for the Soviet Union



Passengers on English railways, where service has been curtailed to clear the lines for war shipments, are frequently forced to wait until long freight trains have sped past toward their destination. In the above picture, a cargo of tanks bound for Russia is shown speeding over the rails.

names of those social groups and clubs and industrial organizations, whose membership is composed of Americans of Italian origin, which had purchased a total of approximately one-half million dollars' worth of Defense Bonds. This drive is still being conducted, and everywhere Americans of Italian extraction are unselfishly responding.

The spirit of loyalty of these people to the President and Government of the United States is proven beyond doubt in the following excerpts from some of the many resolutions adopted by their clubs and organizations:

The Alliance Clubs of North America at a regular meeting of the executive committee resolved that its 30,000 members "strongly stand ever ready for duty and call." Figli d'Italia, Santa Barbara, Calif., resolved, "We swear to offer ourselves, our organization, and our resources to the national defense." Italian Pharmaceutical Association of the State of New York resolved, "We have decided also to individually and collectively give our entire resources and our entire energies to bring about a quick and glorious victory to our Nation." Italian Union, Inc., resolved, "We place everything that we have at your disposal." Local 48, Italian Cloak, Suit, Reefer, and Shirt Makers Union, with a membership of 10,000, resolved, "We Americans of Italian origin are ready to fight against anyone or safeguard the integrity and the democracy of the United States of America." Italian Barbers Association resolved to "serve America" and "consecrate their sons" to the Nation. The Excavators and Building Laborers Union, Local 731, resolved to "co-operate with all their energies toward the national defense" and to buy the "greatest possible number" of Defense Stamps and Bonds. Logge Italo-Americane dell'Ordine Operaio Internazionale resolved, "In this solemn hour" to "assume every duty and meet every sacrifice for the defense" of this country. "Death to nazism and fascism. Long live the cause of democracy and independence."

#### Notizie brevi

Anche nella Svizzera neutrale il razionamento dello zucchero ha subito nuove restrizioni. Ai consumatori di caffè, te o cioccolata è concesso un solo pezzettino di zucchero, a meno che non portino seco una dose addizionale.

Il presidente Vargas del Brasile ha firmato un decreto col quale si autorizza il Ministero della Guerra ad aumentare le forze armate brasiliane, chiamando in servizio le riserve e permettendo l'arruolamento dei volontari.

Si segnala che negli Stati Uniti d'America i prezzi dei viveri sono aumentati, dal 17 febbraio al 18 marzo ultimo, dell'1.5 per cento.

Un dispaccio della United Press annuncia che l'Italia—secondo le stesse affermazioni dell'alto Comando italiano—ha subito nell'Africa del nord perdite che ascendono durante lo scorso mese di marzo a 16,495 fra dispersi, morti e feriti.

### UNITY OF ITALO-CANADIANS

Under the auspices of our paper, starting today, a movement is launched to create a UNION OF ITALIAN-CANADIANS: that is to say, a movement aiming at a federation of all organized forces which, though leaving to each particular group its own characteristics autonomy, will unite under the same banner all Italian-Canadian societies and other bodies for the attainment of general aims which are of interest to the community as a whole.

These aims, for the moment, are to be identified with a full, generous and efficient collaboration with the people and the government of Canada in the war effort whose purpose is the defeat of the dictatorships of the Axis powers. In the future, as the movement develops and extends to all sections of the Dominion, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, they will be amplified and clarified so as to embrace the whole Italian-Canadian community.

The idea of this UNION might have appeared utopic up to a few years ago, when destructive influences and factious elements were setting themselves the task of dividing our masses into antagonistic groups and of provoking differences and splits which served the purpose of those who had axes to grind.

Today the situation has radically changed. The tragedy of the war has opened the eyes of many people, has dispersed the mists of confusion and has brought to light certain truths which before were either denied or made the object of derision.

This UNION is possible today because over and above religious and political creeds, personal views and private interests there shines the light of an ideal of

liberty and justice which warms everyone with its regenerating flame.

In giving birth to the movement the Provisional Committee for the Union of Italian-Canadians, composed of the editorial board of this paper, is of the opinion that the most significant and eloquent gesture by which the idea of this UNION can be launched is a unanimous affirmative vote in the plebiscite to be held on April 27th, 1942. To that end it directs to the Italian-Canadians the following appeal:

"In the past many among you lent a willing ear to the policies of fascism which, by presenting itself in disguise, was able to inflict a severe blow upon the forces of liberty and progress throughout the world.

"To the destruction of democratic guarantees, to the martyrdom of the best sons of the Italian people who looked forward to a future of redemption and well-being for all the sane forces of the nation, fascism has added its participation in the war at the side of Hitler.

"In so doing the government of Mussolini has encouraged and rendered possible the destruction of the freedom of the peoples of Europe by the armed forces of Hitler. Not only that; by its servile attitude in its relations with barbarous Nazism it has delivered into the hands of warmad pan-Germanism the most sacred rights of the Italian nation and has endangered the autonomy and independence of Italy.

"That is why, conscious of the very grave responsibilities of the hour, we are appealing to you to unite with the Canadian people for a total war against the evil minorities which hold the world under the constant threat of misery, war and oppression.

"And that is why we invite you to proclaim your will to march shoulder to shoulder with the Canadian people by voting YES in the plebiscite which will take place on the 27th day of April.

"We can and must accomplish this act of human and brotherly solidarity, our head high and free from false blushes, without concealing our principles or renouncing any of our sympathies for our land of origin.

"By vindicating, as already many Italian-Canadians have done, the honor and the risk of fighting in the front line, thereby giving evidence of sacrifice and of courage, we are saving the honor and the tradition of the Italian people."

## Italiani del Canada!

E' questo il giornale della vostra fede

ABBONATEVI!

SOSTENETELO!

DIFFONDETELO!

Facciamo assegnamento sulla vostra collaborazione piena, sincera, cordiale

## LA VITTORIA

(THE VICTORY)

Italian Weekly Newspaper

Published every Saturday of the year by

"La Vittoria" Publishing Company

926 Avenue Road — Toronto, Ont. — Phone MO. 5170

Rev. A. BERSANI, Managing Editor

Yearly Subscription—\$2.50 Single copy—5 cents.

Advertising rates on application