

Peter V. Cacchione

Member New York City Council

IN ORDER for Italy to emerge a strong and independent country, all fascist leaders must be brought to justice for their crimes. All people's organizations, such as trade unions, peasant organizations, consumer groups that existed before the Mussolini regime, must be permitted to exist again. Free democratic and secret elections must be held after order has been restored, so that the people can choose the government they desire. All fascists' fortunes and enterprises must be confiscated by the new government. Assistance on the part of the United Nations is necessary for the rehabilitation of Italy by means of food, medicine, materials, machines, and loans in order to make Italy as nearly self-sustaining as possible pending a solution at the peace table.

My opinion of the five-party coalition that led in the movement for peace is that this national front represents the overwhelming majority of the Italian people. It should so be recognized by the military authorities of the Allied Nations. The military authorities should work with the leaders of the national front, accept their assistance, as well as advice on every military and political move that is made in Italy. Evidently, the five parties have been ignored so far by these military authorities. The five parties could have done a great deal more in organizing and mobilizing the people to assist the Allied military authorities in their objectives. If this had been done right after the invasion or immediately after the ousting of Mussolini, the Badoglio government would not have been able to have delayed for five weeks and thus given the Germans the opportunity to entrench themselves in most of Italy.

I would define the role of the United Nations as that of liberators, destroying the fascist regime, allowing and fostering the legal existence of all anti-fascist political parties, as well as trade unions and people's organizations, and restoring all the democratic rights of the people so long denied by the fascist government.

I DO NOT consider the Allied Military Government a satisfactory instrument on the Italian mainland. Very few of the lower fascist officials in Sicily have been removed. No meetings of the people are permitted to be held. Anti-fascists are still held in prison. As yet there is no freedom of the press. All these things must be done before I would consider it satisfactory.

The United Nations should rally to its assistance every sincere anti-fascist. There are many of these in the United States, in Mexico and South America—all sincere fighters against fascism. They should be contacted and passage to Italy secured for them. There should be no discrimination because of political beliefs. The ones who

should be refused this opportunity are those who call themselves "anti-fascists" but who have always been anti-democratic and have revealed themselves by their enmity toward a member of the United Nations, namely the Soviet Union. To permit people such as these entrance into Italy would only lead to greater disunity of the people rather than the unity that is so urgently needed at the present time. Most of the sincere anti-fascists were leaders in organizations of the people. They are known and trusted by the Italian people. To use these anti-fascists together with the leaders of the five parties in Italy would be a sure way of destroying whatever influence fascism still has left in Italy.

The five weeks delay the Badoglio government was permitted after the ousting of Mussolini enabled the Nazis to entrench

themselves, to strengthen their position. From all indications they are going to fight to the last ditch to hold the Allied army at the Po river. This means that Italy is becoming a bitter battleground in this war. The Allied governments must take all steps to win over the Italian masses to their cause. Italian war prisoners should be taken into the Allied armies and permitted to fight side by side with American and British boys for the freedom of their fatherland. The opening of a second front in western Europe, preferably through France, would force Hitler to fight on another front, would greatly weaken his present position and hasten the day of destruction of fascism on the European continent, thereby bringing the war in Italy to a conclusion and permitting the Italian people the opportunity to reconstruct their nation.

A New Chapter

I DO NOT believe that the contributors to this symposium would have altered the essence of their opinions had they written after the Italian declaration of war. What remains uppermost is the conviction that the Italian people must be the helmsmen of their fate. That belief is supported by the welcome pledge made in the tripartite statement accompanying the announcement of Italy's co-belligerency. So a new chapter opens and what will be inscribed is the story of the beginning of Italian democracy—shaped in war and perfected in peace. But it is only the beginning. The immediate, paramount task is to cleanse the peninsula of the Wehrmacht. And if there are those who consider this objective as solely military, they will be fighting critical battles with one hand tied behind their back. Military policy is no better than the political policy in which it is inevitably rooted. Correct political approach will be that which disdains to commit again the errors of the past and fulfills with deeds the proffered pledges. Because our commanders and those of the British are in direct charge of Italian operations, on them, along with our civil representatives, will fall the major responsibility of making and executing policy consonant with the desires of the Alfreduzzos and the Constantinos of whom Jimmy Savo talks so movingly. "They are Italy more than anybody else, because they are the majority"—a majority whose aspirations the king and his chief minister thwarted for two decades. They are the men and women of Naples who with bare fists fought back the Nazi machine gunners; they are the workers of the north who jolted Badoglio into capitulation when other and more sinister plans were occupying his mind. They are the five-party coalition.

Italy will redeem herself. Italy is also the testing ground of whether we shall harmonize our interests with those of the peoples of Europe, whether we shall move with the forces released in this war of liberation or find ourselves isolated and stigmatized by the chicanery and class-selfishness of some men in exalted places.

Italy will need our help in a hundred different ways. It must be the kind of assistance which, without strings attached, will give Italy the strength and the means of restoring her own power without those native parvenu imperialists who have brought her close to the grave. For that we shall have to understand the cause of Italy's poverty and reject the discredited theories of Italy's "overpopulation." This Malthusian hokum has been a comfort to latter-day expansionists—the purveyors of *lebensraum* myths. I know that such intentions are farthest from the minds of Mr. Bellanca and Mr. Christophorides, but a few words in their statements might be misinterpreted as lending credence to such views. The reason for Italy's steep economic decline will not be found in her so-called surplus of people. It will be found in the squandering and pillage of her former rulers—a looting which reached its crescendo during Mussolini's regime. To become self-sustaining Italy above all needs a broad, progressive government which will know how to use her resources both for victory and reconstruction.

JOHN STUART.

YUGOSLAVIA'S REAL LIBERATORS

Louis Adamic further exposes the Mikhailovich myth and describes the true anti-Axis fighters in his native country—the great People's Liberation Front, embracing all patriots.

AS I WRITE, in mid-October, the general press carries a great deal of news about the Partisans in Yugoslavia. But there is as yet meager understanding of the significance of the movement of which they are a part—of the Yugoslav People's Liberation Front that two years ago was little more than a phrase and then gradually evolved into a potent military-political idea, a fighting program in line with South-Slavic traditions and natural instincts formed through centuries of adversity.

There are a number of ways of describing the Yugoslav Liberation Front. One, and perhaps the most graphic, is to say that it is a hastily, crudely constructed military-political raft which, tossing on the turbulent and bloody flood waters of spontaneous revolutionary resistance, had room for both Communists and various kinds of anti-fascist non-Communists. This last fact makes it one of the most important developments in the world today.

The raft was built of logs, planks, and debris that floated about. It never pretended to be a *Normandie* or a seagoing yacht; nothing as finished and fancy and slick, nothing as delicate and vulnerable as that. It was in its own way an extremely tough, efficient, and tenacious craft.

THE Axis and Mikhailovich, assisted in varying degrees by the Yugoslav government in London and some of the agents of the British War Office (up until January '43), tried their best to wreck it. Uninformed or reactionary Americans in and out of the State Department helped by suppressing or ignoring the facts of its existence for over a year, stealing the Partisans' victories over the Nazis, Italian fascists, and two different kinds of quislings, and attributing them to Mikhailovich. But the flood waters finally—just lately—carried the raft over the retaining walls of censorship, first weakened by Moscow, the Inter-Continent News, and the leftist press in England and America.

Then official Britain, noticing the Red glow over the miracle of Stalingrad, experienced enlightenment, which will be forever to her credit—if it does not dim out in the near future. Official Britain began to take steps toward establishing liaison with the Partisans, specifically with Tito, their commander-in-chief.

LIAISON was established in May 1943 and announced on July 21 by the General Allied Headquarters for the Middle East at Cairo, which is a British outfit and which suddenly admitted that the Partisan successes during 1942-43 were of great value to Allied strategy. But until just the other day, as it were, these successes were skimpily reported in the large American papers, news magazines and journals of opinion, although information about them was available in New York from day to day—at the office of Inter-Continent News, a source no redder than the communiques of the Red Army, which were published. In

mid-September United Press dispatches and the New York Times special correspondents still mistakenly credited the victories to Mikhailovich or the Chetniks, perpetuating the hoax that the inner clique of reactionaries and chauvinists in the Yugoslav government-in-exile and their pals, the British agents who have interests in Rumanian oil and Yugoslav mines, began to erect way back in 1941.

AS OF this writing, no large American—or, so far as I know, British—publication has yet noticed the Liberation Front beyond mere mention. It is persistently ignored as the democratically constituted over-all of the military-political-administrative system operating in the liberated territory which has also a deep influence in the occupied regions of Yugoslavia.

This is not true of the Axis press. Nearly a year ago fascist writers began to take notice of the government of the Yugoslav Liberation Council (*Veche*) as practiced in the liberated territory. It was no mere administration that they could ignore, but a democratic procedure in continuous action which worked effectively against the Axis scheme of fomenting internal strife and inciting one national or religious group against another. Russo, the Zagreb (Croatia) correspondent of *La Stampa*, wrote that "the Partisans have indeed become heirs to the Yugoslav idea." The Serbo-Croatian unity, which appeared dead and buried in 1941 as a result of the combined doings of quisling Pavelich and quisling Nedich and the government-in-exile and Mikhailovich, has been resurrected under the leadership of Tito and Dr. Ivan Ribar, president of the Liberation Council.

Swinburne wrote: "Not with dreams but with blood and iron shall a nation be molded at last." The first Yugoslavia—as I show in detail elsewhere—was molded with dreams and chicanery, and from the top down. Now, within the Liberation Front, a new Yugoslavia is being molded with blood and iron, from its depths up . . . from within the resistance, in victory and defeat . . . in and from the raft.

BUT something else is being molded in that raft—war and postwar techniques, formula, approaches, and relationships. Within the Yugoslav Liberation Front movement, as in wartime Russia, various kinds of non-Communists (the great majority of the population, as in Russia) have been working together with people who call themselves Communists. They have been working together on the basis of mutual war and postwar aims. To stress: this fact seems to me of crucial importance. I say "people who call themselves Communists," for in the Partisan Army and among the Liberation Front civilians that designation—after two years of almost unbelievable struggle for life and eventual freedom—lost the special, sharp, distorted meaning it had before the war. Not that Communists have given up the Communist ideology or that non-Communists have taken it on. In the situation in which they find themselves most prewar labels have become irrelevant long before the Comintern was dissolved. The titles that mean something now are "Liberation Front" and "collaborationist" or "White Guard," "Partisan" and "Ustashi," "Chetniks" and "Nedichevtsi," "ally" and "enemy" and "traitor," "Mother Russia" and "the Anglo-Americans."

People who used to belong to many parties are working and fighting for something beyond the whole botch of fear-ridden counter-revolutionary impulses and unrealistic revolutionary notions of the previous twenty-five years, beyond the red-herrings and the Stalinist-Trotskyite struggle, beyond the Moscow trials and the Russo-German pact, beyond World War II. That something is as yet without a name unless it is "a New World."

The Yugoslav Liberation Front contains a lesson for the rest of the Allied world. It is a working united front.

LOUIS ADAMIC.