

**ITALIAN BROADCASTING, RADIO VATICANA AND THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1910-1945**

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

By

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APRIL 2007

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Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to a select and extremely crucial group of people without whom not only this project would not have seen the light of day, but without whom I would not have evolved into the person I am today.

First and foremost my mentor and dearest friend, Kenneth Short. Thank you for putting the seed in my mind and helping me to believe that I could do this; thank you also for the endless hours you spent reviewing the work, talking to me on the phone (even when on vacation) and pushing me along in every way possible. You have been an endless source of inspiration; I would have never had a life in academia without you.

Many thanks also to my thesis advisor Nick Cull for his presence, enthusiasm, and warm welcome into the University of Leicester. Thank you also for your patience during some of the most difficult moments of my life.

To Nicole Casarez also, my hero at UST, goes my deepest gratitude. You are an amazing friend and the best editor anyone could dream of having for their thesis.

Although a more recent addition to this project, I am deeply and enthusiastically indebted to Claudia Prestel for her invaluable criticism and fierce critical reasoning. You have made me a more sophisticated thinker and I am for ever indebted to you.

Deep, heartfelt thanks to the other members of the committee, Jean Seaton, Ian Harris, as well as Nigel Aston. Thank you, all, for making this process interesting and exciting.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to my extended family in Houston, all these wonderful individuals who kept me smiling and supported me through it all: Wayne and Maude Peters, Robin Williamson (my academic mom), Jerry Kramer, Lisa McNamara and the rest of my dear friends in the UST community.

To my Houston women, Laura Pipkin, Laura Harrison, Daria James go my love and loyalty for ever. Thank you for being the intrinsic fabric of my life.

To my oldest best friend Sarita Choudhury and Maria, always, all my love and gratitude. You have made me feel vibrant and tri-dimensional.

Last but certainly not least to Vanda, Alfredo and Massimo Bornigia, my family, with whom I share genes and to whom I owe my intelligence and whatever is left of my sense of humor after the completion of this project, go my eternal love and gratitude. This dissertation is dedicated to you.

Abstract

This doctoral dissertation critically examines the development of *Radio Vaticana*, the official broadcasting voice of the Vatican State and the Papacy, from its founding in 1931 through to the end of the Second World War in 1945. Exploring the relationship of *Radio Vaticana* to the Vatican itself, as well as defining the radio's broadcasting content, is essential for any understanding of this particular broadcaster's essential role as the international voice of the Papacy's foreign and domestic policy. Although it is outside the scope of this dissertation to include a parallel study of the official newspaper of the Vatican, *L'Osservatore Romano*, periodic reference is made to its articles as a comparative tool in illuminating the serious, if not traumatic, issues the Church faced during this challenging period.

The study is set against the historical background of the Roman Catholic Church's loss of its long political and educational dominance of the Italian peninsula after the establishment of the Italian state in the 1870's under Count Cavour and King Victor Emanuel, all too soon to be followed by the Church's enforced relationship with Italy's post-world war Mussolini-led Fascist government. Charting the Church's re-establishment of its influence and accommodation with Fascism during such a critical period of Italian history is of paramount importance in understanding just how far Church's objectives were fulfilled in the following years. Such objectives, the main one being the continuity of the survival of the Church and the expansion of its influence worldwide, were implemented through the use of the Vatican media. However, the Vatican had more to worry about than its relationship with Mussolini, for the rise of Fascism across Europe threatened the Catholic faithful from Spain to Germany. 1920-1943 was a formative period in the history of media development in Italy as well, as it witnessed the rise and fall of Fascism, the arrival of the Allied Forces, and the establishment of the new Italian state under the hegemony of the *Christian Democratic Party (DC)*. Similarly, the years preceding and immediately following the Second World War epitomize a phase of great transition, danger, and change for the Catholic Church. After re-affirming its influence over the Italian masses with the help of Fascism, the Vatican played a careful balancing act between the Allies and the Axis forces in order to survive the world conflict and 'protect the faithful' around Europe.

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PREFACE

This doctoral dissertation critically examines the development of *Radio Vaticana*, the official broadcasting voice of the Vatican State and the Papacy, from its founding in 1931 through to the end of the Second World War in 1945. Exploring the relationship of *Radio Vaticana* to the Vatican itself, as well as defining the radio's broadcasting content, is essential for any understanding of this particular broadcaster's essential role as the international voice of the Papacy's foreign and domestic policy. Although it is outside the scope of this dissertation to include a parallel study of the official newspaper of the Vatican, *L'Osservatore Romano*, periodic reference to its articles are used as a comparative tool in illuminating the serious, if not traumatic, issues the Church faced during this challenging period.

The study is set against the historical background of the Roman Catholic Church's loss of its long political and educational dominance of the Italian peninsula after the establishment of the Italian state in 1861 under Count Cavour and King Victor Emanuel, all too soon to be followed by the Church's enforced relationship with Italy's post-world war Mussolini-led Fascist government. Charting the Church's re-establishment of its influence and accommodation with Fascism during such a critical period of Italian history is of paramount importance in understanding just how far the Church's objectives were fulfilled in the following years. Such objectives, the main one being the continuity of the survival of the Church and the expansion of its influence worldwide, were implemented through the use of the Vatican media. However, the Vatican had more to worry about than its relationship with Mussolini, for the rise of Fascism across Europe threatened the Catholic faithful from Spain to Germany. 1920-1943 was a formative period in the

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State ownership of the electronic media in the twentieth century was common throughout continental Europe through 1945.¹ The European nations needed to have complete control over something as potentially dangerous as the telegraph, and they implemented it, generally, through the Ministry of Posts and Telegraph. Italy, who shared state ownership of the media with countries like France and Germany into the 1960's, was uniquely characterized by a minimum amount of change in the political structure of the nation. Despite shifts from Monarchy, to Fascist state, to the post-war democratic political system, the fundamentals remained unchanged. This trait was strongly reflected in radio and post-war television. Due to its close physical proximity to the Italian state, shared language and cultural background, the development and history of the Vatican state from its inception in 1929 until the end of the war mirrors pervasively Italy's history. During the period that eventually led to the unification of Italy, namely 1830 to 1870, Italian-Papal relations had been considerably strained. The loss of the Papal States signified the end of an era for the Catholic Church, and the beginning of a phase of great uncertainty that would be partially resolved with the Lateran Accords of

1929. The full triumph of the influence of the Church in the Italian society would not happen, however, until 1948, with the victory of the *Christian Democratic Party* in the national elections. Indeed, after re-establishing itself at the end of the First World War, the Catholic Church worked to maintain an element of continuity in its influence in society, an objective that was partly achieved through the use of the media.

Whereas Italian newspapers were controlled at first by their owners and sponsors, then by the Fascist regime and were later fragmented into the wide-ranging positions of Italy's new democratic political life, radio, partly due to the public ownership of the electromagnetic spectrum, and partly because of its potential power, was kept under government control. Therefore, one cannot discuss the development of electronic media in Italy as separate from the political history of the nation. Due to such continuities in Italy's politics, today's media is a culmination of the process initiated by the Monarchy at the turn of the twentieth century and developed more fully by Benito Mussolini during his more than twenty years of rule. Similarly, the Catholic Church kept a firm grip of control over *Radio Vaticana*² and monitored its content closely. An analogy can be drawn between the Italian government's control of EIAR and RAI³ and the Vatican's control of its entire media, including the official state newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*.⁴

After extensive research into the available literature, the author has found that the full scope of this dissertation has never been done before. A wealth of information can be found regarding the history of the Church, Fascism, the development of broadcasting in Italy, but nowhere was it possible to locate an academic work that combines all these important elements and added to it, for the first time, the history of *Radio Vaticana*. The

findings of this thesis indicate that the Catholic Church behaved like a political apparatus, working to safeguard its interests in the face of Fascism and Nazism. Each Pope, namely Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII, wanted to ensure the re-establishment of the political and moral influence of the Church. The main priorities of the Vatican in the years 1870 to 1945 were the continuity of power within the Church, the re-establishment and maintenance of the sphere of influence of the Vatican in Europe,⁵ and the survival of the new Vatican state following the Lateran Accords of 1929 with the Fascists, leading to the Second World War.

Much has been written about the responsibilities, moral and political, held by the Catholic Church toward the Holocaust. Historians and commentators have portrayed Pope Pius XII as either Hitler's secret ally or as a much-misunderstood leader who did his best to protect and serve, following the teachings of Christ. I started this research with no pre-set opinion but with a commitment to realise the highest level of objectivity, without demonizing or finding justifications for the Church.

After extensive research, I came to the conclusion that much of the contemporary academic work regarding this controversy seemed to fail to recognize the historical context within which the Catholic Church was forced to operate.⁶ Assuring the survival and flourishing of the Vatican in Europe required a careful diplomatic balancing act. Having lost its influence in Europe since the 1870's, the Catholic Church attempted to replace its moral and political power in the new, post-war democratic environment; on the other hand, it could be argued that the intrinsic nature of an organization such as the Catholic Church put it on a different level from other entities whose interests were solely political. As a religious force, the Church should have been held to higher moral and

spiritual standards, which would render questionable at best some of the actions taken by Popes Pius XI and Pius XII.⁷ This work pays particular attention to the historical context within which church policies⁸ and actions were undertaken, and follows a qualitative, narrative, historical model of analysis.

*

From 1900 until 1914, the start of the First World War, Italy enjoyed a relative degree of tranquillity and prosperity. The Parliamentary democracy led by the House of Savoy was unchallenged and the country had been at peace, excepting some African colonial expansion into Eritrea, parts of Somalia, and Libya. Although the economy was still dominated by agriculture, industrialization and urbanization continued steadily. The inventor and industrialist Guglielmo Marconi was the protagonist and catalyst for media development. In 1898, he had already founded Great Britain's *Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company*, which was the first of the many companies he would establish to market his patents and his equipment throughout the world. Marconi later created another company, *British Marconi*, which was partially funded by the British state. In the United States as well, Marconi managed to obtain the exclusive monopoly of maritime communications. Then, in 1902 the Italian inventor granted to the Italian government the free use of his patents for twenty years, hoping to obtain the monopoly of the newly developed radio market in Italy. His attempt was only partially successful. What Marconi was able to accomplish, though, was the planning for and opening of *Radio Vaticana* in 1931.

The years leading up to the beginning of the Second World War saw the emergence and consolidation of the Fascist dictatorship in part through the use of radio,

the creation of the cult of the leader in the person of Benito Mussolini, and the gradual convergence of interests between the Catholic Church and the Fascist state. This process was finalized and made official with the signing of the Lateran Accords at the end of the decade. Despite mutual suspicion and endless struggles over the control of education, both entities realized their dependence on each other to expand and foster their own spheres of influence.

While Italian radio was already being used to propagate Fascist ideology and to glorify the regime, *Radio Vaticana* was still very much under construction. At first the Catholic Church was suspicious toward the new electronic medium because it might be used to promote the ideals of modernism and secularism that Benedict XV had amply criticized in his encyclicals.⁹ However, as religious personalities were granted increasingly more airtime on Italian radio by the Fascist regime, church leaders began to understand the immense potential of the new medium. Hence began the propagation of faith on the airwaves.

In 1931, *Radio Vaticana* broadcast its very first program to the world. Using Marconi's help and patent, Pope Pius XI's voice and blessings were heard across the world. The event was covered extensively by the domestic as well as the international Press, demonstrating the Church's pervasive influence, and giving it, for the very first time, a mass mediated, unified, voice. Mussolini himself expressed great satisfaction at the result and assured the Church of continuous support.

During the Second World War, state-owned radio was put to use exclusively as a propaganda machine, one that would exalt and exaggerate the mighty power of the Italian army and the inevitability of the Axis' ultimate victory. The Vatican found itself in a

very difficult position. It declared its opposition to the war and its official neutrality; Pope Pius XI made many appeals to both sides, exhorting for a peaceful resolution of the escalating tensions. At the same time, the Church was forced to maintain officially neutral relations with both the Axis and the Allied forces. After extensive research into British/Vatican intelligence documents for that time period however, evidence seems to support that the Catholic Church was quietly supportive of the Allies. The Pope was very concerned about the destruction of churches in Germany and Poland by the hand of the Nazis, as well as the persecution experienced by Roman Catholic priests, nuns, and the laity.

Radio Vaticana experienced the same internal tension present among Vatican authorities. The Society of Jesus, a religious order founded in 1540 by Saint Ignatius Loyola, had been running the station since its very inception, providing religious programmes, broadcasting the Pope's messages, and disseminating news of current events, both domestic and international. The Jesuits were the ideal choice for such a role because their order had been created to fight the Protestant Reformation and help the Church to re-conquer power. The Victor General, as head of the Jesuits, was directly responsible to the Pope. Over the years, The Society of Jesus acquired the much justified reputation of being the intelligence powerhouse of the Church. As hostilities escalated and news about anti-Semitism poured out of Germany, *Radio Vaticana* took a courageous stance as one of the first station to openly condemn Nazi war atrocities in occupied Poland. Fearing retaliation against Catholics abroad however, Pope Pius XII eventually silenced such messages in 1941 and brought upon himself the not fully unjustified criticism and anti-Semitic accusations that still plague his name today.

Surviving records of a limited number of *Radio Vaticana*'s programs are held by the BBC,¹⁰ in official speeches made by the Pope and by various Cardinals on *Radio Vaticana*, and in intelligence documents.¹¹ During the first sixteen months of war, the Catholic radio station took an aggressive stance against the Nazi invasion of Poland and the abuses suffered by its people; to justify the programmes, Vatican officials stated that *Radio Vaticana* was not the official media source of the Holy See and could, therefore, express opinions that were independent from the Catholic Church. In reality however, this was just an expedient used by Pope Pius XII to express his condemnation of Nazi Germany without officially having to alter the "neutrality" of the Catholic Church. After the sixteen months passed, however, Pope Pius XII, fearing even more violent reprisals against Catholics living in Nazi-occupied territory, ordered the end of overt criticism of the Nazis on *Radio Vaticana*. From that moment until the end of the war, broadcasts became less aggressive, and were limited to reporting the facts without editorial comments.

In the immediate post-war years the *Christian Democratic Party (DC)* became the new political leading force in the country with the help of the British, the Americans, and the Church. The hegemony of the new political party, which included some of the ex-Fascists, was present inside the newly formed Italian broadcasting network, *Radio Audizioni Italia*, or RAI. Despite discussions on the importance of fair political representation and objectivity of information, Italian radio was already under the tight grips of the dominant party in the government.

The Catholic Church used its influence to aid the *DC* and to weaken any possibility of influence by the Communist left. *Radio Vaticana* openly condemned

anyone who engaged in conversation with the atheist left and actively lobbied for the support of the western powers to help the Vatican expand its power in the Italian society. *Radio Vaticana* was the loud voice of the Church for all these objectives, which culminated in the overwhelming victory of the *DC*¹² in the 1948 elections.

Given the scarcity of sources available to offer an insight into Church policies and programming of *Radio Vaticana*, primary material was carefully analyzed such as radio broadcasts given by various Church authorities, intelligence documents obtained at the Public Records Office in London, at *Radio Vaticana* and at the *Biblioteca Vaticana*.¹³ One of the most comprehensive and insightful works on the Catholic Church in the twentieth century was written by the Italian historian and *La Sapienza*¹⁴ professor Guido Verucci. *La Chiesa nella societa' contemporanea* (1999) is by far the most detailed historical analysis of Church policies. The author used excerpts from *L'Osservatore Romano* to emphasize points, although almost no mention was made, curiously, of *Radio Vaticana*. Perhaps the difficulty in accessing such information was the reason for the author's omission of the Catholic radio station. Nevertheless, it seems a pity to exclude such an essential medium of Church expression and influence in society. The author also seemed particularly disillusioned with the policies of the various Popes, especially Pius XI and Pius XII, viewing their actions in a purely political and non-spiritual manner. Regardless, the book offers important information about Church policy, Papal documents and the relationship between the Vatican and the Fascists. The rest of the insights made in this dissertation were the result of a careful scrutiny of Papal encyclicals, speeches, letters, and written records of private meetings between the Pope and members of his hierarchy.¹⁵

With regards to the political and communication history of Italy, the most comprehensive survey of Italian radio and television was written by Franco Monteleone. *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia, 1922-92* (1992) was used for much of the historical background on the history of radio. Monteleone offered some interesting insights into the development of RAI and set it in a larger national context. Another book by the same author, *Storia della Radio dagli Alleati alla DC* (1979) provided an in-depth look at the reorganization of radio after the end of the Second World War. The book was very helpful in clarifying a very complex time in the history of Italian broadcasting. Chiarenza's *Il Cavallo Morente: Trent'Anni di Radiotelevisione Italiana* (1978) offered insights on the succession of events both inside RAI and in the nation at large. Although Chiarenza did not provide an in-depth analysis of the changes inside the state-owned agency, he gave a correct chronology of events, as well as some pertinent observations on the nature of the DC's political control over RAI. Siliato's *L'Antenna dei Padroni* (1977) provided an accurate chronology of events inside RAI from as early as 1910 as well as making a poignant and journalistic statement of denunciation against the hegemony of the *Christian Democratic Party* inside RAI.

To set this dissertation in the proper historical framework a number of works were drawn upon which analyzed Italian contemporary history, as well as specific studies on the nature and ideological doctrine of the most influential political parties. For a very detailed initial account of the fall of Fascism and the immediate post-Fascist years, Salvatorelli's *Storia d'Italia nel Periodo Fascista* (1964) offered an excellent analysis of the factors which contributed to the end of the twenty years of Fascist rule in the country. For a more contemporary understanding of Italy's political history Sassoon's

Contemporary Italy (1986) and Ginsborg's (1990) *A History of Contemporary Italy* were consulted. Both authors were instrumental in documenting the shifts in national politics. Sassoon also offered a very insightful look at the structure of Italian politics and how such structure was used to establish the power of the dominant parties in the government. Lepre's *Storia della Prima Repubblica: l'Italia dal 1942 al 1992* (1993) set the context of political history which was an essential element of this dissertation from an Italian perspective. For a detailed look at the *Christian Democratic Party* and the *Communist Party*, Cervellati's *L'Organizzazione Partitica del PCI e della DC* (1968) and Serfaty's *The Italian Communist Party: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (1980) were instrumental in identifying the internal strategy of these Italian parties.

With regards to the relevant legislation a variety of primary sources were used: Decree Nr. 428 of 1947, the Italian Constitution, and various relevant decrees passed during the years under analysis. A complete original collection (not available to the public)¹⁶ of the RAI annuals from 1954 to 1993 was invaluable in assessing how the legislature passed by the government changed the internal structure of RAI. Additionally, important testimonies by key people in RAI's management could be documented in the annuals, such as Jemolo's *La Radio Come Pubblico Servizio*.

For an analysis of the legislation passed regarding radio broadcasting, Caretti's *Diritto Pubblico dell' Informazione* (1994) and Zaccaria's *Radiotelevisione e Costituzione* (1977) offered a reassuringly objective view of the nature of the legislation. While Caretti was used for an overview of all broadcasting legislation, Zaccaria provided most of the relevant insights regarding the limitations of the various laws as well as an in-depth analysis of such laws.

It is important to stress again that the specific topic of this dissertation has never been attempted before; after spending a lengthy period of time researching it, the reasons are obvious. It is extremely difficult to put together the pieces of a puzzle where relevant data is not readily accessible; as a researcher, the work was done investigatively, looking for clues and links between what was said in the broadcasts and Papal documents and what was said privately, in intelligence documents. There are only two books written on the history on *Radio Vaticana*. One is an account of the general timeline of development of the Catholic radio station, *Vatican Radio* (1995), based on articles and editorials found in the *New York Times*. Marylin J. Matelski, the author, was never granted access to either Vatican libraries and, justifiably, she commented on that with open resentment in her introduction. It is unfortunate that the results of her efforts were not particularly effective in drawing the full picture of such a nuanced topic. The other book, *Mezzo Secolo della radio del Papa*,¹⁷ (1981) was commissioned by the Vatican, specifically by the *Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo*¹⁸ in 1981. Significantly the author, Fernando Bea, gave only a very superficial account of the entire war period. The only truly compelling and poignant work ever done on *Radio Vaticana* was completed by the Jesuit Father Robert Graham, who recently passed away. An expert in Church politics and propaganda, Father Graham's work was very helpful in answering the most challenging and nuanced aspects of this dissertation because he was the only one who offered detailed information on *Radio Vaticana* during the war. However, his research about the radio station was concentrated exclusively on the war years.

I was very fortunate to have been granted access to the Vatican material in the *Biblioteca Vaticana*; I was also the first person to have been given access to the *Radio*

Vaticana library, as well as to have been afforded a series of interviews with key figures in the Jesuit administration of the Catholic station, such as Father Borgomeo, General Director of *Radio Vaticana*, and Father Lombardi, Director of Programming;¹⁹ additionally, I travelled to the United Kingdom and Italy for more primary sources found in various national archives such as the National Archive, Kew, and the *Archivio Nazionale di Stato*.²⁰ Finally, all Italian and French sources were personally translated into English.

This thesis provides an important contribution to an understanding of how Vatican policies were implemented through the use of the mass media in Italy during the most crucial years in that country's development. I plan to continue this project with an analysis of the Church campaign against Communism and the role of *Radio Vaticana* in spreading the message of Pope Pius XII to Catholics living behind the Iron Curtain, and go on to chart the remarkable post-Cold War development for the Catholic Church and its radio station, which now enjoys great popularity world wide.

NOTES

¹ This refers primarily to the telegraph. The Press was relatively more independent but somewhat often still controlled. The situation in Great Britain was different, having its own, insulated radio corporation.

² Vatican Radio, the official broadcasting station for the Vatican since 1929.

³ The Ente Italiana Audizioni Radiofoniche (EIAR) was the first official Italian broadcasting company. It changed its name to Radio Audizioni Italiana (RAI) in 1944, following Royal Decree nr. 457.

⁴ L'Osservatore Romano (OR) was founded in 1861.

⁵ This point obviously implied an ongoing dialogue with the existing authorities.

⁶ Books like John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope* are a good example of this line of thought.

⁷ The silencing of the broadcasts on Vatican Radio condemning German atrocities against the Poles is one of the most universally condemned actions undertaken by Pius XII.

⁸ Including papal encyclicals, letters to various bishops and relevant speeches given by each of the three popes.

⁹ Ad beatissimi dealt specifically with these issues.

¹⁰ Radio Vaticana claims that it began to archive its programs in 1958.

¹¹ The author spent two summers in Great Britain's Imperial War Museum, the National Archive and the BBC Written Archives Centre in Caversham Park.

¹² And, consequently, of the church.

¹³ The official Vatican library, inside the Vatican. The author obtained special permission to utilize both libraries.

¹⁴ La Sapienza is Rome's state university.

¹⁵ These records were obtained at the *Biblioteca Vaticana* in the Vatican.

¹⁶ The collection was given to me as a gift by the head librarian of the RAI Archives, where the author spent many hours researching. I am deeply indebted to Mrs. Tucci for her generosity.

¹⁷ The title translates as *Half a Century of the Pope's Radio*.

¹⁸ The Office of Propaganda and Development,.

¹⁹ Access to the *Biblioteca Vaticana* was granted through a formal request for research, but the library of *Radio Vaticana* was accessible because Archbishop Miller (who is in charge of education for the Vatican) recommended me to Father Borgomeo, S.J., who was the Director of *Radio Vaticana*.

²⁰ The National State Archive.

CHAPTER ONE

FROM THE UNIFICATION TO FASCISM, 1870-1920'S

“Let the Princes and Rulers remember this truth, and let them consider whether it is a prudent and safe idea for governments or for states to separate themselves from the holy religion of Jesus Christ, from which their authority receives such strength and support. Let them consider again and again whether it is a measure of political wisdom to seek to divorce the teachings of the Gospel...”

Pope Benedict XV

The ideology of freedom, equality and people's sovereignty born with the Enlightenment and the French Revolution expanded everywhere in Europe during the nineteenth century. After the fall of Napoleon in 1815, the Vienna Congress and the Holy Alliance led to the Restoration, which was intended to re-establish the status quo before the French Revolution. Although it was imposed with force and determination, the Restoration could not erase the liberal principles already well established among the European peoples, specifically the middle class, which wanted a larger recognition of their interest. The result was a spreading of revolutions and insurgencies throughout Europe.

Italian-Papal relations, 1830-1870

Similar social unrest occurred in Italy. In 1832, for example, riots broke out in *Cesena* and *Forli'* against the government of Pope Gregory XVI's. When the Supreme Pontiff died on 1 June, 1846, Cardinal Giovanni Mastai Ferretti became the new Pope with the name of Pius IX. He was born in *Senegallia*, located in the central Italian region named *Marches*, from a minor noble family without any previous history of significant connections with the Catholic Church. He attended the *Scolopi* Seminary in *Volterra* for five years. The historian Indro Montanelli in his book, *L'Italia del Risorgimento*, notes that, after attending the seminary, the future Pope Pius IX became actively involved in

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the town's social life, becoming a good equestrian, swordsman, but an even better pool player. When he developed a scandalous affair with a young actress of dubious reputation, his family sent him to Rome to find employment and to stay with one of his uncles who was a priest. *Ferretti* applied to the *Guardia Nobile*, the Pope's personal militia, but was turned down because of his health condition. Five years later, he took the vows and became a priest. His homilies were light, plain, interspersed with a good dose of humour, and delivered with the skill of a veteran actor. In 1823 the still priest Giovanni Mastai Ferretti was sent on a long and difficult mission to Chile, where he gave ample proof of his diplomatic skills. Upon his return, he was appointed Bishop of *Spoletto* and shortly after of *Imola*, where he was also named Cardinal.

By the time Cardinal Ferretti became Pope Pius IX in 1846, the time was ripe for a liberal government and the people, misunderstanding the new Pope's first government decisions, initially viewed him as a champion of liberal ideas and willing to concur with the reunification and independence of Italy. His freeing of political prisoners however, was related to the fact that he was still in control of central Italy; therefore, what appeared initially as a liberal move was not his intention. This became apparent by his aversion to any type of real power sharing, which eventually led to his loss of popularity. On 29 April, 1848, Pope Pius IX proclaimed his refusal to "join the national crusade against Austria."¹ This event represented the culmination of the growing disagreements between the Pope and the local people's representatives, creating one of the gravest crises in the history of the Italian Risorgimento. As the historian Halperin commented: "It destroyed the neo-Guelfist dream and sowed dissension among Italians by placing religion and Church in opposition to country."² As a result, after a major uprising in the

city, Pope Pius IX fled Rome for the small southern town of *Gaeta*, under to protection of *Francesco di Borbone*. The next year, the Roman Republic was proclaimed, led by Mazzini and others, with the military help of Giuseppe Garibaldi. The occupation of Rome by the Italian nationalists put in the forefront the so-called Roman question: because of it, the once perceived patriotic Pontiff now became the hardest enemy of the Italian national program. The Catholic Church continued to see a steady decrease in its territories when large portions of the peninsula were handed over to the Kingdom of Sardinia after a successful war against Austria; furthermore, Pope Pius IX saw the papal provinces of *Romagna*, *Umbria*, and *Marches* fall under the power of the House of Savoy.

The Supreme Pontiff tried to rally the support of the European Catholic nations to help him defeat the Roman Republic and re-establish his position in Rome. Spain, Austria and the Bourbon Reign of the Two Sicilies were ready to attack Rome. France officially agreed to help the Pope, told Austria that the French army would occupy Rome and, at the same time, communicated to Mazzini that the French troops would enter Rome to protect the Republic. Mazzini and Garibaldi were not so naïve to accept the proposal and resisted the French attack. The best patriots, *Dandolo*, *Masina*, *Mameli*,³ died fighting on the *Gianicolo* hill in Rome.

By 1860, therefore, only Rome and the surrounding territory known as the patrimony of Saint Peter remained under the control of the Catholic Church.⁴ In 1861, the Italian state was proclaimed, followed by the liberation of Rome by the Italian troops in 1870, which ended the temporal power of the papacy. The Supreme Pontiff remained inside the Vatican and no Pope would leave it as a sign of protest until the establishment

of the Fascist government and the signing of the Lateran Accords in 1929, which ended the Church's state of exile and established the Vatican State.

The development of Italy

The parliamentary constitution placed on Italy had a profound impact on the new nation, depending on the region. The northern part of the country, namely Piedmont, was well-suited to handle this type of government. After all, as J.A.S. Grenville points out, Parliamentary government had taken root in Piedmont before unification.⁵ However, extending the system to the entire peninsula in 1861 posed some serious problems:

It was now intended to cover under one blanket the very different traditions and societies of the former city states, the papal domains and the Neapolitan Kingdom. It was a unity imposed from above. For many decades 'unity' existed more on paper than in reality. Italy had the appearance of a Western European parliamentary state.⁶

Arguably, a true sense of unity in the country began to occur with the creation of the first national media, newspapers, then radio, and finally television. The reality created by the new forms of media, especially radio, helped to foster identification among people of such disparately fragmented regions, developing for the very first time a national consensus or, at the very least, some national cultural standards.

One of the crucial elements of this transformation process was literacy. It appeared clear to the political ruling class that a modern state could not compete with others without having a minimum standard of education. At the time of unification, three-quarters of the population could neither read nor write and compulsory elementary education was not instituted until 1877. The following data shows specifically the illiteracy levels from 1861 until the beginning of the twentieth century: in 1861 it was

74.7%; ten years later, in 1871 it had reduced to 69.3%; finally, in 1901, it had decreased to 48.9%.⁷

The education process took place with a different pace between the former Italian states in accordance with their previous history and commitment to education. The poverty of southern and central Italy was painfully and blatantly apparent compared to the Northern parts of the country. However, irrespective of geographical location, the number of illiterates was higher among women compared to men because they were most often relegated to the home. History would later show that this trend continued with the Fascist regime and the Catholic Church of the 1920's and 30's. Despite a period of modernization at the beginning of the twentieth century that witnessed the birth of social, humanistic sciences such as psychology and sociology, both Mussolini and Pope Pius XII were interested in preventing women from obtaining advanced degrees and from being involved in politics.⁸

The Press was also a tool for helping literacy, although its distribution was made mainly locally. As a matter of fact, the use of railroads for distribution was limited. The Italian railway net in 1859, on the eve of the country's unification, was of only 1829 kilometres so distributed: the Reign of Sardinia (and Piedmont) had Km. 850; Lombardy and Veneto had Km.522; the Papal State had only Km. 101; Tuscany had Km. 257; finally, the Reign of the Two Sicilies had Km. 99.

The Italian and Catholic Press

The German historian and philosopher Oswald Spengler wrote that two powerful tools dominated modern times, *Schiesspulver* und *Buchdruck*: gunpowder and the Press.⁹ Many industrialists around Europe tried and at least partially succeeded in taking control

of the Press. Italy, the newcomer, was and still is no exception. All categories of industry, ranging from textiles to steel makers to bankers among many, did their best to acquire or control new or old newspapers through funding or direct purchase. For instance the Agnelli and Gualino families financially supported Frassati, the editor of Turin's *La Stampa*; steel makers bankrolled the Perrone family, editors of Rome's *Messaggero* and of Genoa's *Secolo XIX*. Other financiers were approached by journalists eager to establish newspapers, such as *Il Corriere della Sera*, founded in 1876 by Eugenio Torelli-Viollier with the support of the Creppi and the De Angeli textile families. At the beginning of the twentieth century even the government began to secretly finance minor newspapers. The Ministry of Interior had a fund designated specifically for this purpose. Prime Minister Salandra admitted to this practice but when he was asked to give details about it in the Parliament, he refused to do so and was not pressed any further.

For his part, Pope Pius IX encouraged the creation of Church-owned publications to "neutralize ideological poisons," namely any writings that went against the teaching of the Catholic Church.¹⁰ In 1850 the Jesuit Carlo Maria Curci established *La Civiltà Cattolica* and in 1861, the same year of the proclamation of Italy's unification, *L'Osservatore Romano*¹¹ was published. It was the first, official Church newspaper, the most important, and it remains so today even in the presence of other Catholic newspapers. The Jesuit scholar Thomas Reese reported that *L'Osservatore Romano* had been

compared to *Pravda* in the pre-perestroika days of the Kremlin. Its dull format is filled with papal speeches, Vatican documents and approved commentary. As a

documentary service it is an invaluable research tool, but for the average reader it is a cure for insomnia.¹²

Reese went on to report that, as late as the middle 1990's, the Catholic paper took almost no advertising, which hurt it financially. Although sales have been steadily declining in recent times, the newspaper certainly has had its important place in the history and development of the Vatican. During the Second World War, especially, *L'Osservatore Romano*'s distribution increased dramatically,¹³ a sign that the Italian people were looking for information about world events in non-Fascist publications.

Italy after the First World War

The 1920's were a decade of transition for Italy. As the country adjusted to the traumatic consequences of the First World War, a weak government, and an even more indecisive Monarchy, it fell prey to the totalitarian ideology of Mussolini's *Fasci di Combattimento*. At the beginning of the decade, a number of political parties were formed: the *Partito Popolare* (1919)¹⁴ as a continuation of the *Democrazia Cristiana*, the *Partito Socialista*,¹⁵ later divided with the *Partito Comunista*, (1921)¹⁶ founded by Antonio Gramsci, and the *Fasci di Combattimento*, (1919)¹⁷ established by Benito Mussolini. Initially a member of the *Partito Socialista*, Mussolini was forced to leave it in 1914, when he published an unpopular editorial in the Socialist newspaper *Avanti*¹⁸ in which he expressed cautious support for the war, going against the wishes of the party. After this incident, Mussolini founded his own newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*¹⁹ where he could finally give free reign to his often contradictory political views.

The *Fasci di Combattimento* was nationalistic, anti-Communist, anti-Monarchy, anti-Church, at least at the beginning, and based primarily on the frustrated aspirations and the anger of First World War veterans. The *Fiume* controversy²⁰ exacerbated popular

Italian resentment and consolidated the notion that Italy would not, despite the victory and the sacrifices suffered during the war, receive a fair recompense. Moreover, the melodramatic actions of Gabriele D'Annunzio²¹ created an additional outburst of nationalistic sentiment in the country. These variables set a fertile ground for the emergence of a totalitarian system that would exploit, in the following twenty years, the vulnerabilities of the Italian people.

Fascism and Broadcasting

The first official ordinance concerning the development of broadcasting was promulgated in 1910. The conditions reflected in Law Nr. 395 represented the experimental and rudimentary stages of media development in Italy.²² Presented to the parliament by the Minister of Posts Augusto Ciuffelli, the new law dealt with the technical aspects of electronic communication. However, the preliminary establishment of strict guidelines foretold what would happen to programming, as well. Law Nr. 395 established state ownership and control over the "...establishment and the use of wireless equipment, and in general, of all those for which...one employs energy with the goal of obtaining long-distant wireless communication."²³ Law Nr. 395 also guaranteed to the state the right to give to an Italian-owned private entity the concession for the "...equipment to be built for scientific, educational and also public or private service."²⁴

The significant aspect of this law rested in the fact that the administrative functions for the actual management of the new electronic medium were to be decided by the government itself and by a permanent consulting committee appointed by the government for wireless communication matters. In this way, the state insured its hold over the developing field by granting the concession to a private company without

actually having to invest in such development. In Italy, this peculiar relationship between state monopoly and private involvement in media development would continue into the 1930's.²⁵

The traumatic years of the First World War and the unsettled immediate post-war years temporarily diverted the interest in media development, although radio had demonstrated its military potential during the war. It was not until Benito Mussolini came to power in 1922, that the development of electronic communication became once again an area of growing interest.

Guglielmo Marconi and Italian broadcasting

In 1922, after his first twenty year concession had expired, Guglielmo Marconi sought to convince the Fascists of the need for his own, solely Italian national company which would guarantee the rapid development of radio as well as safeguard the interests of the state against those of foreign private companies such as the French *La Societe' General de Telegraphie Sans Fil* and the American *Western Electric*. These technologically advanced companies were strongly committed to exploiting the profits of the growing Italian communication market. The competition would be fierce: in fact these two companies in particular had gone to the extent of creating subsidiary branches in Italy in the hope of being granted concessions from which they would have otherwise been excluded by restrictive Italian legislation.²⁶

Guglielmo Marconi employed several strategies in trying to obtain the exclusive concession from Mussolini, which included creating the *Societa' Italiana per i Servizi Radiotelegrafici e Radiofonici* (SISERT), in 1921. The following year, a member of this society, a Roman lawyer by the name of Filippo Bonacci, sent a letter to the Secretary of

the Presidential Council urging the Fascist government to grant the concession for the establishment of an Italian national company to handle exclusively the development of radio, as proposed by Marconi. The letter noted:

Italy is the only great industrial power which still does not possess a complete and organized international radiotelegraphic public service managed by an official body which would facilitate the expansion of the Italian network abroad where, for obvious reasons, the Royal government cannot directly intervene with state service.²⁷

Bonatti clearly sought to suggest the long-range possibilities of propaganda for Italy. A national broadcasting company managed exclusively by Italians would not run the risk of having to take into account the potential interests of foreign competitors such as England and France. Reversibly, foreign companies would not only monopolize the Italian market but also act as propaganda agents for their respective governments:

From the foreign companies there has been an obstruction, through the use of unjust propaganda, for the creation of a great Italian radiotelegraphic body, thus with the intent of giving birth within Italy of many small Italian companies which would be dependent on the big foreign companies which, in turn, would reach an agreement amongst themselves for the control of Italian wireless communication.²⁸

The *Societa' Italiana per i Servizi Radiotelegrafici e Radiotelefonici* (SISERT) had presented itself as the only body capable of expanding Italian communication and raise it to the same level of other European countries. SISERT's request for the exclusive concession included a very specific plan of development:

the installation and the use of a complete international radiotelegraphic service based primarily on three great radiotelegraphic centres, out of which one would be in Milan, for the gathering of wireless communication for Northern Italy and for its diffusion to the European capitals. The other two centres would rise, one in

Naples, similar to the one in Milan, for the European servicing of Southern Italy, and one in central Italy for the connection between the two centres in Milan and in Naples to the United States and to the Far East. Moreover, there would be minor centres in the main Italian cities.²⁹

Marconi's strong desire not to let this opportunity pass was justified because in 1922-23 many factors suggested that radio communication would eventually go private. Mussolini however, was ambivalent toward radio development. He wanted state control over it but, although aware of foreign interests in the Italian market, was reluctant to make any hasty decisions in favour of any interested group. Moreover, in 1922 the Royal Commission appointed by the new Fascist government had indicated that it would be unwise for the state's interests to grant the concessions to a single, private body. In the end Mussolini decided to further safeguard state control over radio development by promulgating Royal Decree Nr. 1067³⁰ as a modification of Law Nr. 365 of 1910. In this decree it was reiterated that the installation and use of communication via wireless electromagnetic waves was granted solely to the state and that only the state had the authority to grant the concession to a private entity.³¹ With two successive decrees,³² the state gave itself the right to have its own representatives inside the Administrative Council as well as reserving for itself the presidency of such council. Finally, the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs was once again given complete control over the instalment and the transmission of wireless communication.³³ Broadcasting would be closely controlled and available for propaganda purposes.

Mussolini's broadcasting expansionism

In April 1924, a major governmental reorganization took place representing Mussolini's renewed commitment to communication development and control. After

eliminating the free Press, he was ready to create the basis for a completely Fascist-run radio. The Ministries of Transportation, Posts, Telegraphs, and Telephones were grouped together under the Ministry of Communication, headed by Costanzo Ciano. The new Minister was personally close to both Mussolini and Marconi and played a central role in helping the latter gain some of the Italian profits of radio development. Marconi knew that he would never obtain the exclusive concession for radio development from the Fascist government. For this reason, while he strengthened his relations with the Holy See in light of the future development of *Radio Vaticana*, he also agreed on a shared concession between the two companies “*Radiofono*” and the “*Societa' Italiana Radio Audizioni Circolari*” (SIRAC). The former was part of Marconi’s own, British-financed group, while the latter was the Italian subsidiary of the American *Western Electric*.

On 3 June 1924 the “*Unione Radiofonica Italiana*” (URI) was created. The first Italian broadcasting company was given a six-year exclusive concession by the Fascist government and set up two main sources of income, the state-collected radio license fees and the profits from advertising. The state retained considerable control over the administrative structure and the programming of URI, which went on the air for the first time on 6 October 1924, seven years before the first official broadcast from *Radio Vaticana*. The company could not broadcast news without the prior approval of the Fascist government and the state-owned news agency *Stefani* could be the only source of information. The URI was not permitted to run news from Italian newspapers until 1926, and then only as long as the government had not censored such newspapers.³⁴ By now Mussolini had successfully eliminated most of his enemies in the Press. It seems logical that he would try to set the basis for the same levels of control in radio.

Throughout the late 1920's, the Fascist government consolidated its hold on radio. However, in comparison to the 1930's and the war years, the broadcasting system still had a relative degree of independence from the government with regards to programming. Even though the regime was glorified, listening to the radio had not yet become the Fascist 'mass experience' but was instead linked to the Italian audiences' amazement and curiosity toward the new electronic medium.

By 1927 however, due to the limited revenues generated by advertising, as well as the impossibility of collecting license fees, URI was in considerable financial trouble. According to Royal Decree Nr. 2191, URI had agreed to triple its programming by 1925. This had proven difficult largely because of the high cost of radio receivers limiting its audiences, as well as potential advertising revenues, and the difficulty of reaching the inhabitants of the provinces and of the small rural towns where the majority of the population lived.³⁵ On 15 January, 1928 with Royal Decree Nr. 2207 which would become Law Nr. 1350 in 1929, URI was renamed the *Ente Italiana Audizioni Radiofoniche* (EIAR). The new broadcasting company was to be financed primarily by the *Societa' Idroelettrica Piemontese* (SIP)³⁶ which had assimilated and taken over the *Societa' Italiana Pubblicita' Radiofonica Anonima* (SIPRA).³⁷ SIP's own financial problems led it to be "saved" by the *Istituto Ricostruzione Industriale* (IRI), a tax-funded body created by the government. When IRI took over EIAR's financing, the state finally had direct financial control over the broadcasting corporation.³⁸ This new legislation, the creation of EIAR, and rapid technological advances marked the end of radio's experimental stage.

At the end of the 1920's the Fascist party added another element of control over radio: the Committee of Vigilance. Intended as a department within the Ministry of Communication, the committee's role was to supervise the programming and to help improve the technical development of radio. Not surprisingly, the members of this new government body were all chosen by the government. Representing a wide spectrum of political, industrial, and artistic interests, they were all loyal members of the Fascist party.³⁹ Finally, with Royal Decree Nr. 2526 in 1927, the concession was prolonged another twenty-five years. Mussolini's control over EIAR extended to the Administrative Council which had to include four members chosen by him as well as his choice for the presidency and the position of Managing Director. Lastly, the government could choose to broadcast, at any time, material deemed of public interest as well as require EIAR to submit an annual programming plan to the Ministry of Communication for approval. Such a plan could be modified and revoked at any time by the ministry of Internal Affairs.⁴⁰

The Vatican and European Diplomacy

Benedict XV⁴¹ had been openly opposed to the First World War and had tried on several occasions to exert his influence toward a just peace where there could be no 'winners or losers'. His efforts were met with indifference and hostility by the belligerent powers. As a result, by the end of the world conflict the Church was isolated and had lost a considerable amount of influence. This attitude toward the Holy See was clearly apparent in its exclusion from article 15 of the London Treaty signed by Italy at the peace conference.⁴² On the other hand, the destruction and trauma caused by the war could be used as a means to re-attract people toward Christian religious values. It was a

difficult balance to maintain for the Church. On one side, the continuous desire to maintain the faith of its followers while increasing evangelization; on the other, juxtaposed, the diplomatic and political stratagems needed to survive within the political and cultural contexts of each country. These two goals should not necessarily be mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, accomplishing the latter sometimes required a compromise of those spiritual values that should have differentiated the Catholic Church from other secular institutions.

It should be noted that Benedict XV, Pius XI first and Pius XII later demonstrated officially a consistent attitude of opposition and neutrality toward the war. However, diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the allied powers, especially with the United Kingdom, show a significant paradigm shift in the western powers' perception of the Church on the eve of and during the Second World War. During this conflict, the Holy See provided ample information and resources for the Allied Forces, thus showing that the Vatican was not looked upon with the same amount of suspicion it had experienced after WWI and during the 1920's. The Allied powers valued any information received by the Holy See. They also made use of the anti-Nazi propaganda broadcast by *Radio Vaticana* in 1940 and 1941. Religious leaders had obviously been victorious in re-establishing the prestige of the Church.

Before the Catholic Church could re-assert its political and moral influence in society through the establishment of a Vatican State in collaboration with the Fascists in 1929 and through improved diplomatic relations with other countries however, it would experience a difficult, upward climb. There was, at the end of the First World War, a

consistent dynamic of secularization most European countries. In a 1917 encyclical on the preaching of the word of God, Benedict XV affirmed:

If... We examine the state of public and private morals, the constitutions of laws and nations, We shall find that there is a general disregard and forgetfulness of the supernatural, a gradual falling away from the strict standard of Christian virtue, and that men are slipping back more and more into the shameful practices of paganism.⁴³

The Church combated this trend away from religious customs and practices⁴⁴ by starting a campaign to re-affirm Catholic traditions:

We realize that it must be Our earnest endeavour everywhere to bring back the preaching of the Word of God to the norm and ideal to which it must be directed according to the command of Christ Our Lord, and the laws of the Church.⁴⁵

It is evident that the Church hierarchy was greatly concerned about what it considered new, damaging moral customs which were taking people farther away from the doctrine of the Catholic Church. As Verucci points out:

Divorce increased, crimes against public morality also increased significantly...on the cultural level, the success of new sciences like sociology, anthropology and psychoanalysis, with their significant insights on the moral and social behaviour of the masses reduced further the areas of influence of religion.⁴⁶

Already in the 1914 encyclical *Ad Beatissimi* Pope Benedict XV had deplored not only the war but also the trends toward secularization, modernism, and socialism, and had warned that the abandonment of Christian principles had led to a lack of respect for authority and a disregard for the understanding and merit of class differences:

For ever since the precepts and practices of Christian wisdom ceased to be observed in the ruling of states, it followed that, as they contained the peace and stability of institutions, the very foundation of states necessarily began to be shaken. Such, moreover has been the change in the ideas and the morals of men,

that unless God comes soon to our help, the end of civilization would seem at hand.⁴⁷

Anything that would take away from the spiritual and material authority of the Church was, therefore, condemned.

State leaders were openly admonished that without the support of the Catholic Church they would lose the trust of the people. This was not a veiled threat but a clear and loud message sent by Pope Benedict XV:

Let the Princes and Rulers remember this truth, and let them consider whether it is a prudent and safe idea for governments or for states to separate themselves from the holy religion of Jesus Christ, from which their authority receives such strength and support. Let them consider again and again whether it is a measure of political wisdom to seek to divorce the teachings of the Gospel and of the Church from the ruling of a country and from the public education of the young...when the rulers of nations despise divine authority, in their turn the people are wont to despise their human authority.⁴⁸

Finally, in this pre-WWI encyclical, Pope Benedict XV set the parameters for the proper behaviour of bishops, the general clergy, the masses, and the leaders of the belligerent countries. Particularly significant is the admonition given by the Pontiff to the Catholic Press. All these entities were strongly exhorted to follow his directives, maintain the unity of the Church, and use any means available, especially the Catholic Press, to spread the principles of the Catholic Church and combat socialism:

It is not our intention here to repeat the argument which clearly expose the errors of Socialism and of similar doctrines...and you...will take the greatest care that those grave precepts are never forgotten, but that whenever circumstances call for it, they should be clearly expounded and inculcated in Catholic associations and congresses, in sermons and in the Catholic Press.⁴⁹

Much like Fascism, the Church had also always shown great interest in the education and cultivation of young minds, an area that would lead Pope Pius XI and Mussolini, despite a convergence of interests, to some of their harshest disagreements before and after the Lateran Accords. Pope Benedict XV was attentive to education and, among many writings and discourses, devoted an encyclical to professors and students of literature. Utilizing Dante's masterpiece, *La Divina Commedia*,⁵⁰ as an example of the highest form of literature, he reminded students everywhere of the poet's 'great reverence for the authority of the Catholic Church.'⁵¹ He went on to affirm that studying with "affection" the *Divina Commedia* had brought many to admire the Catholic faith and to "...throw themselves with enthusiasm in the arms of the Church."⁵² The Pontiff saw the *Divina Commedia* as an opportunity to exhort scholars to let themselves be inspired and guided by the precepts of truth offered to them by the Catholic faith. Dante's work also gave another argument against secularization:

" If Dante owes so great part of his fame and greatness to the Catholic faith, let that one example, saying nothing of others, suffice to show the falseness of the assertion that obedience of mind and heart to God is a hindrance to genius, whereas indeed it incites and elevates it. Let us show also the harm done to the cause of learning and civilization by such a desire to banish all idea of religion from public instruction. Deplorable indeed is the system prevalent today of educating young students as if God did not exist and without the least reference to the supernatural".⁵³

The need to combat anti-Catholic trends in society became even more vital after the exclusion of the Church from the peace conference. In the 1920 encyclical *Pacem, Dei Munus Pulcherrimum*, Pope Benedict XV clarified the position of the Church, its distancing from the winning powers and desire to create a new world based on the

Christian principles of forgiveness and compassion. At the same time, the pope offered his spiritual and material leadership in aiding all nations to reach a lasting peace that would prevent any of the war horrors from ever happening again. The intrinsic superiority of the Catholic faith was expressed openly and the Church's objective could be achieved, according to Pope Benedict XV, through the creation of a League of Nations, comprising both winners and losers, under the guidance of the Church and as a separate entity from the United Nations:

“The Church will certainly not refuse her zealous aid to States united under the Christian law in any of their undertakings inspired by justice and charity, inasmuch as she is herself the most powerful type of universal society. She possesses in her organization and institutions a wonderful instrument for bringing this brotherhood among men, not only for their eternal salvation but also for their material well-being to the sure acquisition of eternal blessings...We fervently exhort all the nations, under the inspiration of Christian benevolence, to establish a true peace among themselves and join together in an alliance which shall be just and therefore lasting. And lastly we appeal to all men and all peoples to join in mind and heart with the Catholic Church and through the Church with Christ the Redeemer of the human race”.⁵⁴

With this encyclical, Pope Benedict XV was also openly pursuing the other route intended to bring society under the influence of the Catholic faith: the creation and tightening of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and most European countries. As Verucci explains:

“The network of diplomatic relations was expanded to countries like the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Holland, but also toward the new countries of Eastern Europe...During the pontificate of Benedict XV diplomatic representations of the Holy See increased from fourteen to twenty seven...Benedict XV tried also,

without success, to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, where the separation between Church and state and already been established...⁵⁵

The political objectives of the Church made themselves pervasive throughout Europe. In France, Germany, Austria, and Italy the 1920's showed a shift toward extremely conservative, nationalistic political forces, those that the Holy See considered the strongest to fight Socialism. Between 1920 and 1921 the Church re-established active relations with the French government, even though the bishops were not successful in obtaining a reduction of secular studies, including sociology from the school curriculum. The Catholic Church was antagonistic toward any other social science, such as economics and sociology, which might detract believers from Papal authority. The French *Azione Cattolica* (Catholic Action) was an extremely active organization, favoured by the Pope and full of political overtones that would later help the creation of Catholic parties and unions.⁵⁶

In Germany the initial policy of collaboration between the centre-left government and the Christian unions, including both protestant and Catholic elements, was strongly contested by the bishops. They condemned this cooperation, intimating that it represented a betrayal of Christian principles. Founded in 1920 by conservative Catholics, the Bavarian People's Party had strong right-wing tendencies and was in sharp opposition to Weimar's democratic ideas.⁵⁷ During the following years, most Catholics became members of the party. Overall, German public opinion experienced a shift toward the right, inspired by strong nationalist feelings and resentment toward the allied action of the victors, their demands for demilitarization and the imposition of financial reparations.⁵⁸

The same antagonism toward democracy and favouritism for conservative, nationalistic forces was present in the Austrian Catholic party and unions. The wealthy components of the party, namely industrialists and merchants were interested in maintaining the conservative status quo and their influence dominated party policies over the needs of the rural and blue-collar classes.⁵⁹

The Development of the Church's Communication Issues

During the 1920's the Catholic Church engaged in a subtle but steady process of alignment with the new political forces, carefully shifting its support to those political entities that could best fulfil its objectives. From the end of the First World War until the 1948 elections and the victory of the Christian Democratic Party the three Popes who led the Church, namely Benedict XV, Pius XI and Pius XII, clearly had a common denominator in mind, that is, to expand and solidify the influence of the Vatican in the world while eliminating all lay elements from society. This goal was implemented by using all available means of expression, such as encyclicals, letters, and diplomacy.

Church leaders also used the media both directly and indirectly: they actively owned cinema and entertainment halls, published their own newspapers and periodicals such as *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Jesuit *La Civiltà Cattolica*, and eventually owned *Radio Vaticana*; indirectly, the Vatican did its best to exert pervasive influence on state-owned newspapers, on EIAR, and later on RAI.⁶⁰

The initial attitude of Church authorities over the new developing broadcasting technology had been one of concern, perhaps even relative suspicion. How was this new medium potentially going to affect society and, in turn, the expanding sphere of influence of the Church? Certainly, Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI respectively kept a close eye

on the technical developments of something so innovative; it is also safe to assume that the legal framework of control established by the state would have been of great interest to ecclesiastic authorities as a potential model to follow in the future. One need only look at the Press to see that both the Italian state and the Vatican kept a tight reign over it. While censorship and control over newspapers became increasingly and blatantly worse under Mussolini, the Catholic Church always claimed *L'Osservatore Romano* as the official source of information of the Vatican. Other religious publications such as the Jesuit *Civiltà Cattolica* could not possibly deviate from this. Electronic communication would follow the same pattern.

Popes may have changed but the political objectives did indeed remain the same. On 6 February 1922, Cardinal Achille Ratti became pope and took the name of Pius XI. Less than ten years later *Radio Vaticana* would start operating. The new Pontiff was well aware that the Vatican needed to continue diplomatic efforts to re-establish itself as a strong presence in Europe. While Cardinal Pietro Gasparri⁶¹ was nominated Secretary of State of the Vatican the Washington Conference on disarmament was closing. It had started in 12 November 1921 and had succeeded in establishing the limits for the naval armaments of the Great Powers while re-asserting the status quo in the Pacific and the sovereignty of China. Such arrangements ensured that the UK lost its maritime hegemony. Meanwhile the new Soviet State was taking shape.

The Catholic Church needed to find its place in the midst of such a difficult climate of political change. Similarly to the messages sent by Pope Benedict XV in his encyclicals, Pius XI believed that the Church was the sole entity that could re-establish a sense of order in a society that was spiralling downwards toward liberalism, laicism, and

Socialism. For the Church, re-Christianization was absolutely necessary and needed to be asserted against the predominant above-mentioned values. A multi-oriented approach was needed. First, states should be reorganized legally and constitutionally, following the re-establishment of the “social kingdom of Christ.”⁶² Next, social mores and cultural customs would necessarily follow.

During this time of transition, the Catholic Press was full of such proactive messages and exhortations. After all, aside from the pulpit, using newspapers was the fastest and certainly one of the most effective ways to affect informed or literate public opinion. Catholic values needed to be taken out of the private sphere in which they had been relegated and brought forth in the public arena.⁶³ An article in *L'Osservatore Romano* of 19 January 1919 stressed this point. Similar opinions were expressed in the Vatican newspaper on 14 February 1919 and on 12 June 1920.

Pope Pius XI was quick to recognize that the propagation of Catholic values would benefit greatly from the utilization of all available means of communication. While the target market of the Press, however significant, was limited to Italy, electronic media, because of its very nature, could have unprecedented success reaching the population, especially considering the high levels of illiteracy in Italy and the potential for propagating Church policies. Thus, Pope Pius XI observed with caution the development of the Italian broadcasting system while preliminary plans were being discussed for the building and opening of *Radio Vaticana*. A distinct paradigm shift was made by Church authorities in the 1920's regarding broadcasting, once it became apparent that such technology would be extremely beneficial to the Vatican in spreading the voice of the Pope to 'faithful followers' all over the world.

³⁰ 8 February 1923.

³¹ Siliato, F. (1977). *L'Antenna dei Padroni*. Milano: Gabriele Mazzotta Editore, p.26. Also in Monteleone, F. (1992).). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio, p. 25, footnote 25 offers a breakdown of the decree with a discussion of the most important articles: article 12 called for a limit of twenty five years for the length of the concession; article 17 gave the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs the right to impose over a private entity the firing of personnel not considered idoneous for reasons of national security.

³² Royal Decree Nr. 1618, 9 July 1923; Royal Decree Nr. 2755, 9 December 1923.

³³ Monteleone, F. (1992).). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio, p. 25.

³⁴ Siliato, F. (1977). *L'Antenna dei Padroni*. Milano: Gabriele Mazzotta Editore, p.35.

³⁵ Monteleone, F. (1992).). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio, p.29

³⁶ SIP was an electricity generating company jointly owned by private investors and the state. In this instance it was utilized to finance SIPRA.

³⁷ Zaccaria, R. (1977). *Radiotelevisione e Costituzione*. Milano: Giuffrè Editore, p.23.

³⁸ Siliato, F. (1977). *L'Antenna dei Padroni*. Milano: Gabriele Mazzotta Editore, p.35.

³⁹ The most influential people in the committee were prominent members of the Fascist Party: Antonio Stefano Benni, head of the General Confederacy of the Industry; Ercole Cartoni, representative of those interested in developing the market for radio receivers; Gaetano Polverelli, editor of the "Popolo d'Italia" and secretary of the journalist union, overall representative of the Press. In Monteleone, F. (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio, p.47.

⁴⁰ Zaccaria, R. (1977). *Radiotelevisione e Costituzione*. Milano: Giuffrè Editore, pp. 25-26.

⁴¹ Benedict XV's pontificate lasted from 1914 to 1922.

⁴² Verucci, Guido (1999). *La Chiesa nella Società Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza.

⁴³ "Se al tempo stesso consideriamo a che sono ridotti i costumi pubblici e privati e le leggi onde si reggono i popoli, vediamo crescere ogni giorno il disprezzo e la dimenticanza d'ogni concetto soprannaturale; vediamo illanguidire il vigore severo della virtù cristiana, con obbrobrioso e rapido ritorno all'indegnità della vita pagana". Benedict XV (6/15/1917). *Humani Generis Redemptionem*.

⁴⁴ The following data is a good example of the cultural transformation that was happening in Italy after the war; divorce was not legal but the requests for separation increased dramatically: 1918-2,029 requests; 1919-3,952 requests; 1920-4,458 requests. Istituto Centrale di Statistica (1958). *Sommario di Statistiche Storiche Italiane, 1861-1955*. Roma. In Verucci, Guido (1999). *La Chiesa nella Società Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza.

⁴⁵ "...abbiamo creduto, in unaffare di tanta importanza, di dover porre ogni diligenza per chiamare la predicazione della divina parola alla norma data da Cristo e dalle leggi ecclesiastiche. Benedict XV (6/15/1917). *Humani Generis Redemptionem*, par. 4.

⁴⁶ Verucci, Guido (1999). *La Chiesa nella Società Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza.

⁴⁷ "Invero, da quando si è lasciato di osservare nell'ordinamento statale le norme e le pratiche della cristiana saggezza, le quali guarentivamo esse sole la stabilità e la quiete delle istituzioni, gli Stati hanno cominciato necessariamente a vacillare nelle loro basi, e ne è seguito nelle idee e nei costumi tale un cambiamento che, se Iddio presto non provvede, sembra già imminente lo sfacelo dell'umano consorzio." Benedict XV (11/1/1914). *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*, p 24.

⁴⁸ "Rammentino questo i principi e i Reggitori dei popoli, e vedano se sa sapiente e salutare consiglio, per I pubblici poteri e per gli Stati, il far divorzio dalla Religione santa di Cristo, che è sostegno così potente delle autorità. Riflettano bene se sia misura di saggia politica il voler sbandita dal pubblico insegnamento la dottrina del Vangelo e della Chiesa...così, allorquando chi regge i popoli disprezza l'autorità divina, i popoli a loro volta scherniscono l'autorità umana". Ibid, p.4.

⁴⁹ "Non vogliamo stare qui a ripetere le ragioni che provano a evidenza l'assurdità del socialismo e di altri simili errori...e voi, o Venerabili Fratelli, cercate, col vostro abituale interessamento, che quegli autorevoli insegnamenti non cadano mai in dimenticanza, e che anzi nelle associazioni cattoliche, nei congressi, nei discorsi sacri, nella stampa cattolica si insista sempre nell'illustrarli saggiamente e nell'incunarli secondo i bisogni. Ibid, p.4-5. A discussion of the importance of such directives was included in the 1/19/1919 issue of *L'Osservatore Romano*.

⁵⁰ The Divine Comedy.

Notes

- ¹ Halperin, S. William (1939). *Italy and the Vatican at War*. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, p.xi.
- ² Loc. Cit.
- ³ Goffredo Mameli was the author of the Italian national anthem. After fighting in Milan against the Austrians he joined Mazzini and Garibaldi.
- ⁴ Loc. Cit.
- ⁵ Grenvill, J.A.S. (1980). *A World History of the Twentieth Century*. Glasgow, Great Britain: William Collins Sons, p.58.
- ⁶ Loc. Cit.
- ⁷ Tagliacarne, G. (1967), *Analfabetismo-Grande Dizionario Enciclopedico*. Roma: UTET.
- ⁸ Until 1912 only a very small portion, 2 per cent, of Italians were granted the vote. Finally in 1912, manhood suffrage was introduced. Women did not receive the same right until 1945.
- ⁹ Ottone, Piero (1996). *Storia del Gionalismo Italiano*. Milano: Longanesi & Co.
- ¹⁰ Zizola, Giancarlo (1996). *La Chiesa nei Media*. Torino: Societa' Editrice Internazionale.
- ¹¹ The new daily Catholic newspaper was published in Italian only until after the Second World War.
- ¹² Reese, J. Thomas (1998). *Inside the Vatican: the Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church*. London, England: Harvard University Press, p.218.
- ¹³ For a more an in-depth discussion of this subject, please see chapter four.
- ¹⁴ 100 seats in government, the Catholic Popular Party.
- ¹⁵ 156 seats in government, the Socialist Party.
- ¹⁶ The Communist Party.
- ¹⁷ The Fascist Party.
- ¹⁸ The name translates as "Forward".
- ¹⁹ "The Italian People", 15 November 1914.
- ²⁰ The port of Fiume was Italian speaking and claimed by the Italians during the peace conference.
- ²¹ Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863-1938) was an Italian poet and playwright, famous for his nationalistic rhetoric.
- ²² Zingale, S. Gotti Porcinari, L. (1976). *La Legge di Riforma della RAI*. Roma: Edizioni AIART.
- ²³ Article 1 of Law 395 stated that the state had control over the "...stabilimento ed esercizio di impianti radiotelegrafici e radioelettrici e, in generale, di tutti quelli per i quali...si impiega energia allo scopo di ottenere effetti a distanza senza l'uso di conduttori..." Caretti, P. (1994). *Diritto pubblico dell'Informazione*. Bologna: Il Mulino, p. 81.
- ²⁴ stabilimento ed esercizio di impianti radiotelegrafici e radioelettrici e, in generale, di tutti quelli per i quali...si impiega energia allo scopo di ottenere effetti a distanza senza l'uso di conduttori". Loc. Cit.
- ²⁵ Loc. Cit.
- ²⁶ Monteleone, F. (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio, pp.10-11.
- ²⁷ "L'Italia e' l'unica delle grandi potenze che non abbia ancora un completo e organizzato servizio pubblico radiotelegrafico internazionale a mezzo di un grande ente che facility l'espansione della rete Italiana all'estero, dove, per evidenti ragioni politiche, il Regio Governo non puo' intervenire con servizi statali..." Acs. Pres. Cons., Gabinetto (1934036), fascio 13/1 Nr. 2057. sottofasc. 1. Memo of Filippo Bonati to Giacomo Acerbo, 18 November 1922. Ibid, p. 11.
- ²⁸ "Da parte delle societa' estere e' sata finora ostacolata, mediante una ingiusta propaganda, la costituzione di un grande ente radiotelegrafico italiano, e cio' allo scopo di far sorgere in Italia tante piccole societa' dipendenti dale maggiori societa' estere le quali poi fra loro sarebbero d'accordo per il controllo dei servizi radiotelegrafici italiani" Ibid, p.11.
- ²⁹ "...l'impianto e l'esercizio di un completo servizio radiotelegrafico e internazionale, basato soprattutto su tre grandi centri radiotelegrafici, di cui uno a Milano, ove si accentrerebbero le comunicazioni radiotelegrafiche dell'Italia settentrionale per la loro irradiazione verso le capitali d' Europa. Gli altri due centri sorgerebbero, uno Presso Napoli, simile a quello di Milano, per il servizio europeo dell'Itaia meridionale, e uno nell'Italia centrale per il collegamento dei due centri di Milano e di Napoli con le Americhe e con l'Estremo Oriente. Vi sarebbero inoltre centri minori nelle principali citta' d'Italia..." Ibid, p.12.

⁵¹ “grande riverenza per l'autorita' della Chiesa Cattolica. Benedict XV (4/30/1921). In *Praeclara Summorum*, par. 6.

⁵² “gettarsi con entusiasmo nelle braccia della chiesa” Ibid, par. 8.

⁵³ “Se Dante deve gran parte della sua fama alla fede cattolica, basti questo esempio, per non parlare di altri, a dimostrare la falsita' dell'asserzione che obbedienza di anima ed intelletto a Dio siano un ostacolo alla genialita', mentre invece la elevano. Si dimostri cosi' il danno fatto contro l'educazione e la civilta' dal desiderio di eliminare la religione dall'istruzione pubblica. E' veramente deplorabile il sistema prevalente oggi di insegnare ai giovani studenti senza la minima referenza a Dio o al soprannaturale”. Ibid, par. 10.

⁵⁴ “Non sara' certo la Chiesa che rifiutera' il suo valido contributo, poiche', essendo essa il tipo piu' perfetto di societa' universale, per la sua stessa essenza e finalita' e' di una meravigliosa efficacia ad affratellare tra loro gli uomini, non solo in ordine alla loro eternal salvezza, ma anche al loro benessere materiale; li conduce cioe' attraverso i beni temporali, in modo da non perdere gli eterni. Benedict XV (5/23/1920). *Pacem, Dei Munus Pulcherrimum*, p. 5.

⁵⁵ Verucci, G. (1999). *La Chiesa nella Societa' Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 20.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 23.

⁵⁸ Loc. Cit.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 24.

⁶⁰ Monteleone, F. (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio.

⁶¹ The future Pius XII.

⁶² Monteleone, F. (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio.

⁶³ Loc. Cit.

CHAPTER TWO

MUSSOLINI'S RISE TO POWER AND THE ACCOMMODATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TO THE NEW FASCIST REGIME

With profound faith in the religious and Catholic mission of the Italian people, the Fascist government has methodically proceeded, through a series of administrative and legislative acts, to return Italy to that character of Catholic nation that liberal politics had tried to cancel for many years.

Benito Mussolini

The Vatican, the Church and Fascist Italy

The Church's compelling need to re-establish its societal influence in the face of the socialist and modernist threats renders the Lateran Accords of 1929 even more poignant. The often tumultuous road to the agreement between the Fascist state and the Church was started by Pope Benedict XV and continued by Pope Pius XI. Both used *L'Osservatore Romano* to promote their ideas. The Italian popular Press was used first by its own publishers and later by Mussolini to propagate the opinions and ideas of the existing authorities. The same thing is true of the Catholic Press. All media entities were at the direct service of the Church hierarchy, reflecting officially and unofficially the opinions of Catholic authorities. To defend religious values and teachings against the new social sciences, for instance, *L'Osservatore Romano* stated: 'Catholicism is an accomplished system of sociology that possesses a precise and comprehensive social doctrine.'¹ Rejecting the authority of the social sciences, the Church asserted that the Catholic doctrine is sufficient to answer any question about human and societal behaviour brought up by other disciplines; followers of the Church would need to look no further to find the perfect society.

The difference between the Fascist use of media and that of the Catholic leadership in Italy can only be understood through an analysis of Church language and

practices. Mussolini employed newspapers, film, and radio in blatant and often ridiculous ways to an outside observer. At times religious preachers on EIAR also glorified the current regime, expressing enthusiastic support for the war and thereby contrasting the Church's official neutrality position. However, in general, Church leaders were more astute and subtle because they had different target audiences in mind. When addressing the Italian people at large, for instance, they sometimes used unsigned editorials on the front page of *L'Osservatore Romano* to comment about current political and social events. Those editorials became very important tools, shaping the public opinion of devout Catholics throughout Italy. When messages were aimed at government officials in Italy and abroad however, and especially before the advent of radio, Church leaders expressed themselves in addresses and Church documents, including encyclicals, in a verbose and complex language style that made frequent references to theological doctrine and forced those wanting to decipher Church opinions to read often between the lines. Such official documents were meant as political tools to express the opinion of the ecclesiastic authorities; even though they often contained political statements, these were presented in an indirect way, as part of a larger context that used Catholic values as its justification; the Italian people at large were not directly exposed to this material but through the filtered explanations of priests during Sunday homilies or through articles in the newspapers.

The same indirect approach can be observed in the Church's behaviour toward both World Wars. While officially assuming a position of neutrality, Church leaders worked diligently behind the scenes to further Church interests and safety through diplomatic relations with all the countries involved in the conflict. These are just a few

examples of a line of conduct that will be highlighted repeatedly and will be shown to have continuity among the pontificates of Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII.

In Italy, maintaining the internal unity of the Church was a priority. The other objective was the creation of Catholic entities such as political parties, unions, and associations. Intended as a defence against socialism, these organizations were supposed to represent the needs of the working classes, attract them away from the Socialist Party, and bring them once again under the influence of the Church.² Pope Benedict XV relied heavily on the *Azione Cattolica* to put these goals into action.

The *Partito Popolare* was founded in 1919. Officially considered a separate entity from the *Azione Cattolica*,³ the Catholic party was yet another tool the Church could use to expand its influence in society. Officially, the *Azione Cattolica* was supposed to address solely religious matters, leaving the political arena to the newly formed party. In reality, however, the party was supported heavily by Church authorities and by local parishes, which were the nuclei of action of the *Azione Cattolica*. It is unrealistic to think that the two could operate independently from each other. The *Partito Popolare* received its guidance and inspiration, at least in the beginning, from the *Azione Cattolica*, which, in turn, answered directly to the Bishops, and the Pope.⁴

Many of the objectives of the *Azione Cattolica* had a political and social dimension: (1) the reintroduction of religious education in all elementary schools, something very dear to Pope Benedict XV; (2) the recognition of religious festivities as national holidays; (3) the opposition to divorce and the protection of “moral “ customs in the theatre, cinema, and the arts; (4) the absolute freedom, independence, and inviolability of the Pope; and (5) the elimination of the Ministry of Public Education and

the establishment of a national exam that would render equal students of public and private institutions, along with a special commission representing private schools; the establishment of the *Universita' Cattolica*⁵ (1921) to counter the lay trend in higher education.⁶ Through the pressure exerted on the government by the *Unione Popolare*, the Church was able to fulfil most of these objectives.

Inside the *Partito Popolare* were representatives of many political currents, ranging from ultra-conservatives to moderates, who favoured collaboration with conservative groups, to a leftist presence headed by Miglioli, and to the central group headed by Luigi Sturzo and representing the majority. In the 1919 elections, the *Partito Socialista* won the majority of the seats, followed by the *Partito Popolare*. As expected, much diffidence and hostility existed between the two political entities.

Starting in 1920, however, despite the massive support initially given to the party by the Church, a distancing began to occur between the Catholic party and the Holy See. The latter was unhappy about the party's focus on politics rather than religion; as the head of the *Partito Popolare*, Luigi Sturzo believed that, even though his party was intrinsically Catholic, it should maintain a degree of autonomous thinking for its political choices. This view was in sharp contrast with the opinions of the Catholic authorities who were also wary of those within the party who were not opposed to collaboration with the Socialists. The official Catholic Press, following the lead of the Bishops and of the Pope, condemned the party's philosophy. Pope Benedict XV sent a letter to the Bishops of Northern and central Italy warning the Catholic unions not to emulate socialist principles.

In the early 1920's, the *Azione Cattolica* worked behind the scenes to help the Catholic Church transition from a multi-party government to Fascism. In a gradual process of separation that culminated in the 1924 elections and the establishment of the Fascist dictatorship, the Church, which had been supporting the *Partito Popolare*, moved away from it and toward Fascism. The Catholic Press began to write negative comments about the party after the march on Rome. An article in *L'Osservatore Romano*,⁷ for instance, expressed serious reservations about a potential collaboration between the *Partito Popolare* and the Socialists, which was one of the possibilities that had been discussed at the third Congress of the party in Venice.

State and Church: Mussolini and the Pope

Pope Benedict XV died in January 1922; on 6 February 1922, Cardinal Achille Ratti became Pope Pius XI. During his predecessor's pontificate, the new Pope had been apostolic nuncios to Eastern Europe as well as Bishop of Milan in 1921. In a speech given to his dioceses, he highlighted his political philosophy:

The Pope is Italy's highest authority. In a situation of chaos like the one that the nation is experiencing, it is unthinkable to imagine what prestige and advantages would be obtained by his presence in our country, if his national and international prestige were recognized.⁸

This statement is in line with the objectives of Pope Benedict XV. During the seventeen years of his pontificate, Pope Pius XI's main goals did not differ much from those of his predecessor, namely securing the survival of the Church in an increasingly dangerous European situation and the expansion of the Catholic Church's influence. Differently from his predecessor, however, Pope Pius XI was in a position to potentially produce true

favourable changes for the Catholic Church, something that did indeed occur by the end of the 1920's.

From the very beginning of his pontificate, Pope Pius XI was confronted with the abrupt metamorphosis of the Italian political climate. The march on Rome in October 1922, the King's support for Mussolini and the latter's absolute climb to power even in the face of the Matteotti murder demanded that the Church be extremely careful in continuing to secure its place in society. As leader of the United Socialist Party, Giacomo Matteotti was an important figure in Italian politics, especially after he made two impassioned speeches against Fascism in the Chamber of Deputies. His murder created outrage in many who saw it exactly for what it was, Mussolini's brutal work through the hands of Amerigo Dumini and four more of his men.⁹ Nevertheless, an article that appeared in *L'Osservatore Romano* on 29 October 1922 stated: 'It is announced that the honourable Mussolini intends to start government collaboration with men from all political sides who are interested in the welfare of the people.'¹⁰ This attitude of 'cautious optimism'¹¹ was the beginning of the warming of relations between the Church and the Fascist state. Both entities needed the other to secure their spheres of hegemony: Mussolini desired the blind support of devout Catholics everywhere. It is interesting to note that even after the Lateran Accords were signed, the Duce was still plagued by internal opposition by some of those Italians, perhaps faithful Catholics, perhaps only Catholics by tradition that he had tried to win over by making concessions to the Church. Pope Pius XI needed to create an independent nation-state, re-establish Catholicism as the official state religion, and be the controller of Italy's moral and education system, starting with the youth, always a sore point of contention between the

Vatican and the Fascists. Both sides had, at best, a cautious degree of trust for the other. However, a convergence of interests made their alliance take priority over their frequent, and sometimes heated, disagreements.

The same objectives were pursued on the international front. Pope Pius XI sought to expand the Church's sphere of influence but his efforts proved fruitless at the Genoa International Conference of 1922. In addition, the Pope desired, as Pope Benedict XV also had, that all belligerent countries come together in true forgiveness of one another to achieve a lasting peace. Needless to say, those countries once again ignored his wishes, an attitude that eventually led the Pontiff to distance himself from international affairs.¹²

In 1922 the Catholic conservative Cornaggia Medici established the *Unione Costituzionale Italiana*.¹³ It was an association of Catholics, many of whom had left the *Partito Popolare*. Pope Pius XI sent a congratulatory telegram to Medici, implying that he was not opposed to a decentralization of Catholic political power. The Pope may have actually supported it in order to counter the influence of those within the *Partito Popolare* who were more willing to cooperate with the Socialists.¹⁴

Shortly before the 1924 elections that would result in the overwhelming victory of the Fascist party, a manifesto of one hundred and fifty Catholic personalities affirmed full support for 'the efforts toward peace and national unity that Fascism was putting forth' and attacked anyone who opposed Mussolini. The *Partito Popolare* was in opposition to the Fascist party. Despite this overt display of support for Mussolini, the Church assumed an official position of neutrality.¹⁵ Once again, the "neutrality" of the Church was simply a façade used by Church authorities to mask their already semi-secured position in the new Fascist order. For instance, when the Fascist government put forth the

Acerbo Reform (1923), which gave two-thirds of the seats in the *Camera* to the party with the majority of the votes, the *Partito Popolare* objected on the grounds that it had always advocated proportional representation.¹⁶ Mussolini began attacking the party and threatened the Church for its association with it. The Catholic Church responded swiftly. In 1924, the Holy See advised Luigi Sturzo to leave Italy. Those deputies who had voted in favour of the *Acerbo Reform* were banned from the party, while others resigned. The *Partito Popolare* was left weak and vulnerable, a position from which it never recovered. Shortly thereafter, Mussolini recognized legally the *Universita' Cattolica* and the Fascist Press publicized the imminent beginning of the Holy Year in 1925.¹⁷ The Pope encouraged all Catholic unions to join the Fascist unions.

What was the position of the Catholic Press during these times of change? How did it reflect the position of the Church hierarchy? An important distinction needs to be made between the official Catholic Press that was always in line with Church authorities, namely *L'Osservatore Romano*, and the Jesuit-run *La Civiltà Cattolica* and other publications that favoured Catholic politics. Not all newspapers expressed views that were necessarily consistent with the Catholic Church. On a number of occasions, some of these newspapers, such as *Il Popolo*, openly denounced Fascism. Others, such as the *Corriere d'Italia*¹⁸ expressed a strong unfavourable position toward the *Partito Popolare*. However, *L'Osservatore Romano*, on June 25, 1924 warned Catholics about the doctrine of "obedience" to the established authorities, stressing the risks of a potential civil war and the inappropriateness of an alliance with the Socialists. The Pope himself delivered a similar message in a speech given to the FUCI youth in the same year.

This difference of opinions within the so-called Catholic Press is significant because it shows that the Church did not possess as unified a front as it wanted the world to believe. Rather, internal struggles between pro- and anti-Fascists were and would continue to create a schism at the very core of the Catholic identity. Although, in the end, the will of the highest religious authorities was implemented and represented the Church's official position, many Catholics lost their belief in their leaders.¹⁹

While the reorganization of Italian politics under Fascism was underway, in 1923 the Church reorganized the *Azione Cattolica*.²⁰ To the already existing organizations, the Pope added others: the Secretariat for Morality, the Office for Diocesan Counsel, the Secretariat for the Schools, and the Diocesan Junta. These new organizations answered directly to the leaders of the *Azione Cattolica* and to the Pope. The stricter control exerted over the *Azione Cattolica* favoured not only the Church but the Fascists as well. During these times of change, the Pope frequently warned the *Azione Cattolica*, reminding its members that they should concentrate on spiritual rather than religious matters. This "mandatory neutrality" helped develop Fascism. By staying away from politics, the *Azione Cattolica* abandoned the already vulnerable *Partito Popolare* and any other political entity opposed to Fascism. Given the inseparable link between the *Azione Cattolica* and Church politics, this "new" neutrality masked acquiescence to Mussolini's plans.²¹

The split between the Church and the *Partito Popolare* created a fertile ground for the emergence of, and, starting in 1921, the Church's support for the Fascist party. Despite his atheism and lack of interest in organized religion, Mussolini understood that he needed to accept Catholicism publicly if he wanted to ensure the support of the

Catholic masses. As was noted earlier, Italian political life was fragmented after Giolitti was not defeated and even though the Fascists had already shown a propensity toward violence that had been condemned by the Church, the inability of both socialists and populists to collaborate left a vacuum in the Italian government. That, in turn, facilitated Mussolini's climb to power.

The March on Rome and the March for Christ, 1922: secular versus sacred power.

In October 1922, the Fascists organized the historic "march on Rome". Their objective was to seize power in the capital by starting in the provinces. Mussolini's *Camicie Nere* (Black Shirts) took over government offices and postal services in the provinces, hoping to isolate Rome. The government, situated in Rome, initially did not know how to respond to this dubious insurgence. Eventually, it formulated an emergency decree. Interim Prime Minister Luigi Facta delivered the decree to King Victor Emmanuel III, asking for his support in declaring martial law. However, the King, fearing a civil war, refused to help and forced Facta's resignation. Soon thereafter Victor Emmanuel III sent a telegram to Mussolini inviting him to Rome and to form the new Cabinet.²² Mussolini arrived in Rome the following day, and only at that moment were the Black Shirts allowed to march toward Rome. Ironically then, the actual march on Rome happened only after Mussolini had already arrived at the capital and had officially received the King's endorsement. The "seizing of Rome" never really occurred, but in the years to come, it would serve as a propaganda tool to glorify and adorn with mystique Mussolini's rise to power.

*Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*²³ was the Pope Pius XI's first encyclical. Dealing with the post-war situation in Europe, the document represented a strong accusation against

the lack of respect for God and for the Catholic Church exhibited by European leaders. Published only two months after the “march on Rome,” the encyclical asserted that the problems plaguing Europe could only be resolved by embracing the spiritual guidance of Christ who was represented on this earth by the Pope and the Catholic Church. Pius XI started the letter by praising the procession that had occurred in Rome to celebrate the kingdom of Christ:

We witnessed Our Blessed Redeemer reassume His rightful place as King of all men, of all states, and of all nations when, though hidden behind the veils of the Eucharistic species, He was carried in a magnificent and truly royal triumph of faith through the streets of Our own city, Rome, accompanied by an immense concourse of people representing every nation on earth.²⁴

The “march for Christ” was Pope Pius XI’s attempt to juxtapose the rising power of Mussolini with the ever-pervasive presence of Christ and his followers in Italy and abroad. The Pope intended it as a message to the new Fascist authorities to demonstrate the Church’s immense following. After warning all nations of the imminent dangers of the societal disintegration that would inevitably occur given the present state of affairs,²⁵ Pope Pius XI offered Christ’s guidance to state leaders through the intercession of the Catholic Church:

The only remedy for such state of affairs is the peace of Christ, since the peace of Christ is the peace of God, which could not exist if it did not enjoy respect for law, order, and the rights of authority...If we stop to reflect for a moment that these ideals and doctrines of Jesus Christ were confided by Him to His Church and to her alone for safekeeping...there is no one who cannot clearly see what a singularly important role the Catholic Church is able to play, and is even called upon to assume, in providing a remedy for the ills which afflict the world today and in leading mankind toward a universal peace.²⁶

Pope Pius XI concluded his claim of authority over society with stronger words than those of his predecessor, stating that the Church offered the only solution to the ills that plagued society:

Because the Church is by divine institution the sole depository and interpreter of the ideals and teachings of Christ, she alone possesses in any complete and true sense the power effectively to combat that materialistic philosophy...The Church alone can introduce into society and maintain therein the prestige of a true, sound spiritualism...The Church can, better than any other agency We know of, contribute greatly to the securing of the same peace for the future, to the making impossible of war in the future...No merely human institution of today can be successful in devising a set of international laws which will be in harmony with world conditions as the Middle Ages were in possession of that true League of Nations, Christianity.²⁷

The last statement was a clear condemnation of the League of Nations. However, Pope Pius XI was careful to offer some words of cautious reassurance for Mussolini. After all, in 1922 the emerging power of the fascist leader was already manifest, a political metamorphosis that, as was noted earlier, the Pope could not ignore. For this reason, the Pontiff stated that both patriotism and nationalism were acceptable when operating within the “law of Christ”. The Church would be respectful of new governments provided that the principles and needs of the Catholic Church also be upheld, something that would again ensure that the new political regimes were not overthrown:

...These different forms of government are not themselves contrary to the principles of the Catholic Faith, which can easily be reconciled with any reasonable and just system of government.²⁸

The “march for Christ” and the Pope’s encyclical made it clear that the Catholic Church was determined to assert its own sphere of influence in Italy by reaching a compromise

with the Fascist authorities as long as its demands were met, and in spite of the totalitarian and violent tactics used by the regime.

Once Mussolini was in power, he proceeded to centralize control while weakening his opposition. The Monarchy was preserved to give the nation, both domestically and abroad, a semblance of democracy. The Matteotti murder in 1924 was the last major obstacle in Mussolini's rise to dictatorship.²⁹ Even though there was public outrage in the Press and even accusations against Mussolini in the Parliament, the King did nothing to investigate the murder and the dictator was allowed to stay in power. The opposition further weakened their position by withdrawing from the parliament as a sign of protest, giving start to the *Aventino* phenomenon.

Ironically, some of the loudest protests against the assassination of Giacomo Matteotti came from Catholic anti-Fascist newspaper editors. Giuseppe Donati was the managing director of the newspaper *Il Popolo*, from 1923 until 1925, when he was forced into exile. Although he suffered from continuous threats to his life, Donati was very vocal in his denunciation of the regime once it was apparent that the murder had been committed by the Fascists.³⁰ An article he published in *Il Popolo* stated:

By now it is clear that Matteotti has been killed for reasons connected with his exercise of his political mandate...We have only two requests to make of the guardians of the law: that light be shed on the crime and that justice be meted out to those responsible for it. We do not ask this-let it be known-to give satisfaction to one side or the other; we ask it simply for the honour of Italy.³¹

Another loud anti-Fascist voice was that of the Catholic journalist Francesco Luigi Ferrari, chief editor of *Il Domani d'Italia* from 1923 until 1925, when he immigrated to Belgium.³² On 29 June 1924, he published an article entitled *Resistere*

(Resist) that has probably become one of the most eloquent and prophetic³³ anti-Fascist protests:

What agitated and disturbed the Italian soul and the conscience of the world...after the Fascist assassination of Matteotti will be, by others, isolated and evaluated as the most heinous of political crimes. For us, this crime is the culmination of the inevitable and inexorable reality of the Fascist regime, as we have predicted and judged it for several years. Very few persons can feel as morally serene as we do in affirming that they have given nothing of their spirit or action to Fascism from its first appearance in the turbulent post-war years of Italian life. Not by reasons of sectarianism, nor of reaction; but out of the clear and sure conviction that the ideas, the methods, the men and the works of Fascism would produce nothing of value and that gradually or rapidly Fascism would instead be led to every vile form of degeneration and abomination. We refused the promised “normalization” of Fascism, we denied its boast of “moralization”. The chain that led to the assassination in Rome, link by link, crime by crime, was clear to us from our objective and precise study of what Fascism does, of what it is and will continue to be unless the powerful storm of national and universal indignation strikes it and destroys it forever.³⁴

This article is significant because it not only, sadly, spoke the truth about the negative influence of Fascism on Italian society, but also because, by denouncing Fascism’s supposed “moralization,” it indirectly attacked the official position of the Catholic Church. At the same time that religious authorities were gradually aligning themselves with the Fascist ideology and were using it to restore moral values in Italy, other well-known Catholic newspapers were denouncing the regime’s abhorrent moral standards and violent behaviour.

On another occasion, 23 June 1923, Giuseppe Donati wrote an editorial in which he denounced the Fascist ideology as incompatible with Catholic teachings:

we are aware of two important characteristics of Fascism: the theory of violence and the conception, as 'absolute', of the nation, common to nationalists. Now these two principles are in opposition to the doctrine of the Catholic Church and are therefore incompatible with Catholicism.³⁵

Another interesting parallel can be observed between the strengthening of the Fascist hegemony and the Church's determination to maintain a sphere of influence in society. On 11 December 1925, Pope Pius XI published his fourth encyclical, *Quas Primas*, intended to establish the feast of Christ the King. In 1922 the march on Rome had been followed by the march for Christ; in 1925, the ever-increasing autocratic presence of Mussolini was juxtaposed spiritually by Christ the King. The encyclical may have had a two-fold intent: on one hand the desire of the Pontiff to remind Mussolini and the world at large of the influence of the Church; after all Papal infallibility had been proclaimed in 1871, the moment when the Church had lost its political power. But on the other hand, and even more subtly, there was a clear message sent to the Italian people. Complete devotion should be given to Christ through the intercession of the Church for all spiritual matters, and complete loyalty should be given to local authorities for all temporal matters. A dual dictatorship would be installed, one more overt by Mussolini, and one slightly more indirect through the Church. The plan's completion would have guaranteed the fulfilment of the objectives of Pope Benedict XV, namely the re-establishment of the influence of the Catholic Church that had been lost after the end of the First World War:

It has long been a common custom to give to Christ the metaphorical title of 'King' because of the high degree of perfection whereby he excels all creatures. So he is said to reign 'in the hearts of men', both by reason of the keenness of his intellect and the extent of his knowledge, and also because he is very truth, and it

is from him that truth must be obediently received by all mankind. He reigns too, in the wills of men, for in him the human will was perfectly and entirely obedient to the Holy Will of God, and further by his grace and inspiration so he subjects our free will as to incite us to the most noble endeavours.³⁶

If Christ were King of all men, then the Catholic Church would function as the intermediary of Christ for the people. Citing the Sacred Books, Old and New Testament, of the Bible, Pius XI went on:

It was surely right then, in view of the common teachings of the sacred books, that the Catholic Church, which is the kingdom of Christ on earth, destined to be spread among all nations, should with every token of veneration salute her Author and Father in her annual liturgy as King and Lord, and as King of Kings.³⁷

Pius XI was careful to affirm that the kingdom of Christ was a spiritual kingdom, because Christ himself had 'before the Roman magistrate declared that his kingdom was not of this world.' In this statement it could be argued that the Pope may have been reassuring Mussolini of the Church's intent not to violate the boundaries of its political sphere of influence. Pope Pius XI accomplished this astutely, striking a fine balance between the spiritual and material realm:

It would be a grave error, on the other hand, to say that Christ has no authority whatever in civil affairs, since, by virtue of the absolute empire over all creatures committed to him by the Father, all things are in his power. Nevertheless, during his life on earth he refrained from the exercise of such authority, and although he himself disdained to possess or to care for earthly goods, he did not, nor does he today, interfere with those who possess them.³⁸

The Church's sphere of influence on this earth would concern itself with the salvation of souls, which was being aided by the restoration of the moral values of the Catholic faith effectuated by the Fascist party, and the abandonment of the lay principles that had been threatening such morality since the end of the First World War. A warning

was issued, similar to that given by Pope Benedict XV, that unless the rulers of nations were willing to accept Christ's authority, they would not be able to elicit the respect of the masses:

If, therefore, the rulers of nations wish to preserve their authority, to promote and increase the prosperity of their countries, they will not neglect the public duty of reverence and obedience to the rule of Christ...if [they] are filled with the persuasion that they rule, not by their own right, but by the mandate and in the place of the Divine King, they will exercise their authority piously and wisely...the result will be a stable peace and tranquillity, for there will be no longer any cause of discontent. Men will see in their king or in their rulers men like themselves, perhaps unworthy or open to criticism, but they will not on that account refuse obedience if they see reflected in them the authority of Christ God and Man.³⁹

It is evident from this passage that Pope Pius XI sought the complete public acceptance of the Catholic faith by the new government. In return, the Church would give its support to Mussolini, seeing him as a man of God, operating in this world according to the laws of Christ.

The encyclical ended with the demands made by the Church to the Fascist state, another transparent proof of the use of official Church documents to communicate indirectly with the authorities:

When we pay honour to the princely dignity of Christ, men will doubtless be reminded that the Church, founded by Christ as a perfect society, has a natural and inalienable right to perfect freedom and immunity from the power of the state; and that in fulfilling the task committed to her by God of teaching, ruling, and guiding to eternal bliss those who belong to the Kingdom of Christ, she cannot be subjected to any external power. The state is bound to extend similar freedoms to the orders and communities of religious of either sex, who give most

valuable help to the Bishops of the Church by labouring for the extension and the establishment of the kingdom of Christ.⁴⁰

These demands would be fulfilled by the Fascist government in 1929 with the signing of the Lateran Pacts.

While Pope Pius XI was expressing through encyclicals the pervasive influence and overwhelming importance of the Kingdom of Christ, the Catholic Press was also engaged in a steady campaign of moralization directed at the Italian masses. In a front-page editorial of *L'Osservatore Romano* entitled *L'Universalita' di Roma* (The Universality of Rome), the author summarized a speech given in the *Campidoglio* by Senator Corradini. In it, the senator paid tribute to the 'influence of Catholicism in Italian life.'⁴¹ His words were praised by the newspaper, which condemned the 'artificial and demagogic split between the individual conscience and the collective one, hiding behind a façade of indifference, atheism, and anti-religious sentiments.'⁴² The editorial praised the "return of the people to a religious and spiritual consistency wanted by the established authorities."⁴³ The front-page article shows once again the marriage of interests between the Fascist authorities and the Church.

Similar to what had happened under the papacy of Benedict XV, the official Catholic Press was once again actively involved in supporting the campaign for the moralizations of the Italian masses put forth by Church officials and Fascists alike. A perfect example is an article published in *L'Osservatore Romano* on 3 July 1926. The article praised the swift action taken by the Ministry of Internal Affairs regarding the 'dangerous and immoral behaviour' of the Italian people vacationing at the beach. A government letter was sent to the local authorities of maritime locations, asking them to ensure rigid punishments to any individual who was caught 'offending the public

morality.’ It also included directives establishing the separation of changing rooms for the two genders, the cut and style of swimming suits, and the general behaviour of the vacationers. Minister Federzoni ended the letter exhorting local officials to ‘exercise active surveillance for the implementation of such directives.’⁴⁴ At the end of the article, the writer praised once again the government for understanding the importance of the defence of moral customs advocated by the Church. Similar articles regarding the Ministry’s provisions appeared in Italian newspapers, as well.

Other points of agreement between the Church and the Fascist government were represented in the Catholic media: the campaign to increase the birth rate,⁴⁵ the dangers of urban life and the advantages of a rural lifestyle, the importance of placing God and the nation above the needs of the individual. Mussolini used these Church objectives to consolidate his own totalitarian agenda. Hence, support for the Church’s moral objectives was nothing less than the reaffirming of Fascist ideals.

As the historian Verucci points out, there were those within the Church who were against the established regime and suspicious of Mussolini’s objectives, but they were a minority. The day after the attempted murder of Mussolini, the president of the *Azione Cattolica* Zamboni was quoted in the *Civiltà Cattolica* saying: ‘The *Azione Cattolica* feels the serious obligation to be revering, docile to the government and to the present regime.’⁴⁶

During December 1926, a series of articles appeared in *L’Osservatore Romano* that showed the intensified relationship between Pope Pius XI and Mussolini. One such article praised the ‘very important ceremony’⁴⁷ for the blessing and the affixing of crucifixes in the University of Naples. Local Fascist authorities were recognized in the

article for understanding the importance of the presence crucifixes in the classrooms.⁴⁸

Another article discussed the censorship laws imposed by the regime on variety shows and cabarets:

One should keep in mind that all works which are damaging are those that offend the ethical and family values of the Italian people, even when such works are masked behind the pretence of art...in a Catholic nation, the restoration of moral values cannot happen separately from the religious teachings of the Church.⁴⁹

In the midst of all these political agendas, the Catholic Church and the Fascist state continued their indirect negotiation that would culminate in the Lateran Accords. Pope Pius XI's *Quas Primas* encyclical was also significant because it stated in detail the needs of the Church: resolve the "*Questione Romana*" and the relations with the Italian government; eliminate secularism, the lack of state support for, and interruption of missionary work in Italy's African colonies as a result of the war, the desire for material evils, 'concupiscence of the eyes,' for physical pleasure, 'concupiscence of the flesh,' and 'the inordinate desire to rule or to domineer over others, pride of life.'⁵⁰ Finally, Pope Pius XI demanded the restoration of the sacred vows of holy matrimony as opposed to a mere civil ceremony and the lack of religious education in schools. A significant praiseworthy mention was made regarding the *Azione Cattolica* that had so courageously engaged in the "holy battle" to defend the Church.

It is interesting to observe that before the Catholic Church and the Fascist state started the negotiations that would eventually lead to the Lateran Accords in 1929, Mussolini and Pope Pius XI communicated with one another indirectly through official speeches, encyclicals, and the media. It should come as no surprise, then, that two months after *Ubi Arcano* was published, Mussolini gave a speech⁵¹ to the Camera in

which he responded to most of the concerns expressed by the pontificate in the letter. The Duce wanted to eliminate the *Partito Popolare* as a liaison between the Fascist state and the Church; he was determined to deal directly with the Church, without intermediaries.⁵²

The speech to the *Camera* affirmed that the state needed to respect and protect Catholicism in Italy. To show his commitment to these objectives, Mussolini enacted a series of provisions that won him even more favour with Church leaders: the crucifix was reinstalled in all classrooms and public areas, funds were dedicated to repair the many Churches that had been damaged during the war, taxes for both private and public schools were rendered equal, and religious education was once again made mandatory for all elementary school children.⁵³ Some other extremely important points of agreement between Church and state dealt with the financial assistance given by the Fascist regime to the *Banco di Roma*, which bankrolled Catholic newspapers.⁵⁴ Other concessions included exemptions from the military service for the clergy, the reaffirmation of the sacredness of the sacrament of matrimony, opposition to divorce, and adapting the civil calendar to the religious one.⁵⁵

The Catholic Church, naturally, responded favourably to the above-mentioned provisions established by Mussolini. Another element of continuity between Pope Benedict XV and Pope Pius XI was the preoccupation with society's weakening morality, attributed once again to the abandonment of Catholic principles. Controlling the moral customs and social decorum of the masses represented yet another point of agreement between Church and state. In a meeting with Mussolini on 18 January 1923, the leaders of the *Azione Cattolica* had requested the elimination of gambling, pornography and

alcoholism, and an increased supervision of public places.⁵⁶ Mussolini had already implemented these provisions, an action that, again, won him the increased support of Church leaders. Another vivid example of the communion of interests between the two entities is a letter sent by the general director for public safety only two months after the meeting between Mussolini and the *Azione Cattolica*, in which the director asked that the various area prefects remove from view any pictures or photos that could be offensive to the public morality.⁵⁷

Fascism appeared to be the only political force capable to withstand Socialism and to help the Church re-insert herself fully in the life of Italy. Common interests and common enemies were more important to the Catholic Church than the disturbing signs of totalitarianism that were already present in Mussolini's politics of the early 1920's. It is surprising to observe how Church leaders and the Catholic media conveniently ignored blatant examples of Fascist violence and repression during the establishment of the totalitarian state. Some of these phenomena, such as the creation of the Fascist secret police and of the OVRA⁵⁸ with their violent and brutal tactics, were in sharp contrast with the Catholic Church's ideals and teachings. *L'Osservatore Romano* ignored these manifestations of violence. It did, however, praise Mussolini for his efforts in reaffirming the importance of Catholicism. Even with regards to the Matteotti murder, the Vatican newspaper was careful not to align itself with the segment of the Italian Press that was against the established authorities. A number of anti-Fascist journalists such as Amendola expressed their indignation regarding the assassination and the cover-up done by the Fascist regime. Significantly, some Catholic anti-Fascist journalists also followed this line of conduct and paid dearly for it, as in the case of *Il Popolo*'s managing director,

Eduardo Donati.⁵⁹ Instead, *L'Osservatore Romano* warned the faithful that '*giustizia e politica*' (justice and politics) were not so separate and that the nation should have faith in the power of both to bring forth those responsible for the crime. Suspecting the inability of the justice system to do so was a dangerous attitude:

This behaviour has to stop...in order to give the judicial authorities an atmosphere of absolute prestige and for the necessity that no external pressure or political influence could take precedence over the duties and rights of the justice system.⁶⁰

The Catholic newspaper went on to condemn the segment of the Italian Press that was so set against the Fascist party and that had demanded that those responsible for the crime be found and tried according to the law. Instead, the article warned readers that this hasty attitude of distrust and opposition was dangerous for the country and would be equivalent to taking a 'leap in the dark.'⁶¹

On the other hand, it is important to remember that the Catholic Church was itself in a precarious condition at the beginning of the 1920's and could not afford not to choose its allies carefully. It was difficult to uphold the moral teachings of Christ in a moment of danger, when the Church had been stripped of much of its power. But to many Italian Catholics who opposed Fascism, it was nonetheless a betrayal, a lack of spiritual leadership. The disillusionment would lead some to believe that the Church operated only as a political entity, sacrificing religious values.

Accommodating Church and State: the Lateran Accords

In this climate of communal interests, Fascist and Church leaders began the negotiations that would eventually lead to the signing of the Lateran Pacts in 1929. The beginnings of the talks were headed by Domenico Barone⁶² and by Francesco Pacelli.⁶³ They met from 1926 to 1929, but it was not until 1 January 1927 that Mussolini officially

appointed Barone to the task. Pacelli met with the Pope one hundred twenty nine times before an agreement was reached.⁶⁴ Barone died in January 1929, leaving Mussolini in charge of the last stages of the negotiation.

The road to the agreement was not always smooth. On two occasions⁶⁵ negotiations were interrupted. The causes for the breakdown dealt primarily with the education and control of the Italian youth. Both parties were keenly interested in maintaining their respective spheres of influence over the young masses. In the end, the Church was forced to eliminate the Catholic youth organizations, which were integrated in the Fascist Balilla programs.⁶⁶ As Verucci points out in his analysis of the negotiations, the Catholic Church agreed to relinquish direct influence over the youth in part because Vatican officials were concerned about the survival of the *Azione Cattolica* itself. Moreover, the recognition of a Vatican state, as well as all the other rights that the Church was to gain from the signing of the treaty, was too crucial to compromise.

Political interests aside, personal relationships, trust, and ultimately intellectual understanding could not occur without a degree of identification between those involved in any negotiation or dispute. While it is true that there were many in the Church who did not trust Mussolini, others did. Pope Pius XI had expressed an attitude of “cautious optimism” toward the new Fascist dictator, an optimism that slowly built into relatively more solid ground. Cardinal Gasparri said of the Italian leader after the Lateran Pacts had been signed,

With the rise to power of Benito Mussolini, I had the clear foresight that the right time had come. I understood that I would be able to communicate with him; we were both born out of the working class and we loved our country with the same

simplicity, above all partisanship and interests. I hadn't met him yet but I already trusted him.⁶⁷

Mussolini was also well-aware of the advantages that his state would obtain from the signing of the accords. On 4 May 1926, he wrote to the Ministry of Justice Rocco:

With profound faith in the religious and Catholic mission of the Italian people, the Fascist government has methodically proceeded, through a series of administrative and legislative acts, to return the state and the Italian nation to that character of Catholic nation that liberal politics had tried to cancel for many years.⁶⁸

As was noted earlier, Mussolini was not a religious man, but he was determined to obtain the support of the Catholic majority. After the weakening of the *Partito Popolare* and Sturzo's exile, the Lateran Pacts represented the last step in the consolidation of the Fascist hegemony. From a concrete standpoint, the advantages obtained by the Vatican after the treaty were more substantial than those of the party. But as Mussolini correctly predicted, his dictatorship would enjoy the full support of the Church for years to come.

With the signing of the Lateran Accords, Fascism won the official recognition of the Catholic Church while also obtaining international prestige by presenting the image of a moderate, national state with traditional Catholic values. At the same time, the Church was recognized as the state religion, among many other privileges. The Lateran Treaty was divided in three sections, namely the treaty, the financial agreement, and the actual concordat. All three parts were extremely beneficial for the Church. The most significant points were the recognition of the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church as the only State religion⁶⁹ and the creation of an independent Vatican territory within Rome.⁷⁰ Article 8 also offered an important point: 'Considering the person of the Supreme Pontiff to be sacred and inviolable, Italy declares that any offences against him shall be punished

in the same manner as offences and insults against the person of the king.’⁷¹ The Vatican could count on the Fascist state to protect the Pope, a point that would become very relevant at the beginning of the Second World War and during the escalation of the hostilities, as Goebbels unsuccessfully put pressure on Mussolini to imprison the Pope and take over the Vatican, while at the same time silencing *Radio Vaticana*. Article 12 also proved to be extremely significant during the war, as it allowed the Vatican to have complete freedom of correspondence with all nations, as well as free access to the Apostolic See by Bishops from all over the world. Article 19 extended travelling privileges to diplomats without needing to request the prior permission of the Italian state. Finally, in Article 26, the Church declared the *Questione Romana*⁷² to be irrevocably resolved and recognized Rome as the capital of Italy under the dynasty of the House of Savoy.

While the financial convention was relatively brief,⁷³ the concordat represented the Vatican’s most significant victory. All religious people would receive special treatment by being exonerated from the mandatory military service and even students of theology could postpone going into the army until the age of twenty-six.⁷⁴ Other interesting points showing the newfound privileged position of the Church included separate imprisonment from lay criminals for priests who committed crimes⁷⁵ and the guarantee that the Fascist army could not occupy Churches and monasteries except during emergencies and even in that extreme situation the head of the order had to be notified immediately.⁷⁶ Article 11 officially established the religious holidays recognized by the state. At the same time, the Vatican promised to include a prayer for the prosperity of the King and of the Italian state during all Sunday masses and special

festivities, an interesting element of propaganda from the pulpit.⁷⁷ Adding a prayer for the state and its leader during the liturgy gave the alliance between the Catholic Church and the government a more sacred quality, one to which the masses of faithful across the country could not have been easily opposed. A typical dimension of persuasive strategy, this appeal to authority was extremely useful to Mussolini in the shaping of perceptions of the collective consciousness.

Another point of reciprocal advantage was expressed in articles 19 and 20. Bishops would be chosen by the Church, but with the prior agreement and consent of the Italian state. In addition, Bishops would swear loyalty to the nation:

In front of God and His holy Gospels, I swear and promise, as a Bishop, loyalty to the Italian state. I swear and promise to respect and to have my clergy respect the King and the government, established according to the laws of the state. I also swear and promise that I will not be part of any agreement or give any counsel that could cause damage to the Italian state and the public order. Taking into consideration the well-being of the Italian state, I will avoid any action that might threaten it.⁷⁸

In Article 25, the possibility of a direct relationship between the Monarchy and the Vatican was eliminated. The article stated that the King could no longer give monetary contributions to the Church, and as a result, the Church would not be able to receive these gifts or manage the money independently. However, in article 29 all taxes toward the Church were abolished and the state would continue to supplement the income of the Vatican.

The elimination of all secular elements from society so desired by Pope Benedict XV and by Pope Pius XI started in article 34. The first change concerned marriages:

The Italian state, wanting to give back to marriage, which is the basis of the family, the dignity of the Catholic tradition of its people, recognizes the civic validity of the sacrament of matrimony.⁷⁹

In addition, the priest presiding over the marriage was given legal authority to act as a state representative, including in the ceremony the civil laws' code regarding marriage.

The Vatican was also given the full authority to annul unions.

Articles 35 to 42 addressed the crucially important issue of education and catechism. Students attending religious schools would be required to undergo the state examination that would give them equal standing with students attending public schools.⁸⁰ Very significant was the provision regarding catechism described in article 36:

Italy considers the teaching of the Christian doctrine according to the theology of the Catholic tradition to be the fundamental crowning of public education.

Therefore, the state agrees that the religious education given to elementary-school children should be expanded to include middle schools, according to agreements made between the Church and the state.⁸¹

The article went on to state that the only people qualified to teach such classes were members of the clergy or lay people who had received the appropriate training and Church permission. Finally, all textbooks regarding catechism would be selected and approved by the Church. While article 37 established that all schools would respect religious holidays, article 38 stated that Vatican authorities would select all appointments for faculty at the *Cattolica* University. Further control over all religious schools and organizations was provided in article 39, which stated that such entities would answer directly to the Vatican with no interference from the Italian government.

Perhaps the most significant victory for the Fascist state was expressed in article 43 of the concordat:

The Italian State officially recognizes the organizations dependent on the *Azione Cattolica* since they, according to the directives of the Holy See, execute their activities without involvement in any political party and under the direct dependence of the Church, for the realization and actualization of Catholic principles. The Holy See, on the occasion of the signing of this Concordat, again forbids all religious people from joining any political party.⁸²

As was noted earlier by Verucci, the *Azione Cattolica*, under the guise of not getting involved in political matters, had played a significant role in the gradual weakening and marginalisation of the *Partito Popolare*. This article ensured that the role of the *Azione Cattolica* would be officially marginal in politics while still being of paramount importance in shaping public perceptions according to the wishes of the Vatican and of the state. By exhorting the clergy not to become affiliated with any political organization, the Church was actually intending “any” entity other than the Fascist party.

In summary, the Lateran Accords obtained crucial necessities for the Catholic Church, namely that Catholicism be recognized as the official state religion, the reinstatement of religious education in public schools, the recognition of the sacrament of marriage as legally binding, the acceptance of the judicial character of religious orders, and tax exemptions for such orders. Finally, the Accords, called for the creation of the Vatican state.

Reactions to the Lateran Accords were quick to appear in the Catholic, national, and international Press. *L'Osservatore Romano*, understandably, devoted several articles to comment on the newfound reconciliation between the Fascist state and the Vatican. On 12 February 1929 a front page article analyzed the “spiritual content” of the reconciliation stating that while some may look upon it as a “natural development” in Church-state relations, it represented much more than that:

...a reconciliation not so much between two 'High Powers', two sovereign entities or two governments, but of an entire society with God, through his representative on earth.⁸³

The same article went on to claim that the Lateran Pacts should serve as an example, exhorting all other nations to seek harmony with the true religion of God and re-establish a spiritual dimension in their own societies under the guidance of the Catholic Church. This continued desire to expand the influence of the Church was part of a multi-directional propaganda strategy. A few days earlier, Pope Pius XI had used the Lateran Pacts to magnify the significance of the Catholic faith across the world. In a private address to the diplomatic corps he had affirmed that,

Behind each one of you we cannot fail to see your respective leaders...with your governments, your people, your entire countries, altogether: a vision of truly apocalyptic magnitude, of universal immensity.⁸⁴

The Pope went on to discuss the "moral guarantees" connected to the reconciliation and expressed great faith and gratitude for the support given to the Church by nations and people across the world. Because the Church had been recognized so absolutely in Italy, it was time that the world also recognize its role as the representative of Christ on earth.

Two successive articles in *L'Osservatore Romano*⁸⁵ praised Mussolini for accepting the rightful place of religion in society. Pope Pius XI's response to the Fascist head of the government could only be that of 'father in front of his children, determined to give back God to Italy and Italy to God'.⁸⁶ The Pope also expressed his joy for support given by faithful Catholics: 'another touching voice comes from those who, especially in Italy have said: we will start celebrating Easter again.'⁸⁷ Continuing on the theme of rebirth, the article affirmed that Italy had now "truly resurrected" because 'its political

integrity received the divine stamp without which no temporal authority can be complete.⁸⁸

The American Press was quick to react, as well. The *San Francisco Chronicle* stated on 12 February 1929 that the Vatican was ‘once again at peace with Italy after long quarrel’ because the ‘wound had been healed.’ The *New York Times* reported that Mussolini was “praised for the Vatican speech” and that it was well-received by Catholic hierarchies:

The paper [*L'Osservatore Romano*] applauds the Premier's statement on the Church's special position in Italy and his declaration of pride that Rome is the seat of Catholicism. It adds that he, by interpreting ‘separation’ as ‘distinction’ between Church and State renders that situation acceptable to the Church.⁸⁹

Regarding the Italian Senate's approval of the Vatican Accords, the *New York Times* again reported:

The grave and solemn Italian Senate has seldom unbent as thoroughly as it did today. The aged Senators forgot their white hairs and cheered joyfully at each favourable vote and hooted with disapproval at each contrary one like a crowd of schoolboys on an outing.⁹⁰

By the end of the 1920's, the marriage of the Vatican with Fascism had been sealed. Despite struggles regarding control over the education of the youth and mutual suspicions regarding political agendas, both parties had found a “reluctant ally” in the other, setting a fertile ground for the creation of the totalitarian state which would come to dominate the 1930's.

Notes

¹ “Il cattolicesimo e' un compiuto sistema di sociologia che possiede una precisa e completa dottrina sociale”. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 6/12/1920.

² Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Societa' Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza.

³ Catholic Action.

⁴ The organization of the Azione Cattolica was made up of the following associations: the Society of Catholic Youth, the Women's Catholic Union which also headed the Society of Female Catholic Youth, and finally the Popular Union, comprised of many organizations among which the National Federation of Private Catholic Schools. In Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Societa' Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza.

⁵ The Catholic University.

⁶ Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Societa' Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza.

⁷ 1921.

⁸ "Il papa e' il piu' grande decore dell'Italia...e in una situazione caotica come quella che la nazione sta vivendo e' impensabile quale prestigio e quali vantaggi potrebbero dalla sua presenza derivare al nostro paese, quanto fosse tenuto nel debito conto del suo essere internazionalmente e sopranazionalmente sovrano". BresciaRendina, C. (1999). *I Papi: Storia e Segreti*. Roma: Newton & Compton Editori.

⁹ Amerigo Dumini was one of the leaders of the Fascist Secret Police.

¹⁰ "S'annunzia che l'Onorevole Mussolini intende avviare alla collaborazione governativa...uomini di ogni parte, solleciti soprattutto agli interessi del popolo".

¹¹ Giacomo Martina (1970). *La Chiesa nell'Eta' dell'Assolutismo, del Liberalismo, del Totalitarismo*. Brescia.

¹² Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Societa' Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza.

¹³ The Italian Constitutional Union.

¹⁴ L'Osservatore Romano, June 25, 1924, p.40.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.46.

¹⁶ Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Societa' Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza, p. 43.

¹⁷ Ibid, p.47.

¹⁸ While not officially a Church newspaper, the periodical favoured Catholic politics.

¹⁹ These observations are based on personal conversations with Italians who lived through this period who are often critical of the Catholic Church but mainly are part of the secularized, educated class.

²⁰ Although the Catholic Action was strictly under the control of the Church, even after the Lateran Accords students and professional groups associated with Catholic Action continued to oppose a fierce resistance to Fascism. In Frank Rosengarten (1968). *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press*. Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, p.55.

²¹ Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Societa' Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza, p.45.

²² 29 October 1922. The telegram was sent by general Cittadini and stated: "His Majesty the King asks that you come to Rome as soon as possible to create the new Ministero".

²³ 23 December 1922.

²⁴ "...Abbiamo visto il Nostro Beato Redentore ottenere nuovamente il Suo giusto posto di Re di tutti gli uomini e di tutte le nazioni, quando, nonostante fosse velato sotto l'aspetto Eucaristico, e' stato trasportato con magnifico trionfo regale attraverso le strade della Nostra citta', Roma, e accompagnato da un'immensa folla di fedeli rappresentanti di ogni nazione del mondo". Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio, par. 4.

²⁵ "Small nations complain that they are being oppressed and exploited by great nations. The great powers, on their side, contend that they are being judged wrongly and circumvented by the smaller...these evil results grow in volume from day to day because of the utter impossibility of finding anything like a safe remedy to cure the ills of society...conditions have become increasingly worse because the fears of the people are being constantly played upon by the ever-present menace of new wars, likely to be more frightful and destructive than any which have preceded them..." Ibid, par. 11.

²⁶ "L'unico rimedio per questa situazione e' la pace di Cristo, dato che la pace di Cristo e' invero la pace di Dio che non potrebbe esistere senza il rispetto per la legge, per l'ordine civile e per i diritti delle autorita' costituenti...se ci fermiamo un attimo per riflettere che questi ideali e insegnamenti di Gesu' Cristo sono stati donati da Lui stesso alla Sua Chiesa per protezione, e' apparente che nessuno potra' ignorare il ruolo definitivo e cruciale che e' richiesto alla Chiesa, un ruolo che offer un rimedio definitivo per tutti i problemi inflitti oggi giorno sul mondo e che pone la Chiesa nella capacita' di portare il mondo intero verso la pace". Ibid, par. 40-41.

²⁷ "Dato che la Chiesa e' l'unica istituzione divina che possiede e interpreta gli ideali e gli insegnamenti di Cristo, Lei sola ha la capacita' di far fronte a quella filosofia materialistica...la Chiesa sola puo' introdurre e mantenere nella societa' il prestigio di un vero e sincero spiritualismo...la Chiesa puo, meglio di qualsiasi altra agenzia che Noi conosciamo, contribuire ad assicurare la pace e a rendere impossibile la guerra in un

futuro...nessuna istituzione umana puo avere successo nel delineare un sistema di leggi internazionali che siano in armonia con le condizioni del mondo, cosi' come nel Medioevo era in possesso di un vera Lega della Nazioni, la Cristianita'". Ibid, par.42, 44-45.

²⁸“Questi diversi sistemi di governo non sono contrari ai principi della Fede Cattolica, la quale puo' essere in accordo con qualsiasi retto e ragionevole sistema governativo”. Ibid, par. 12.

²⁹ Socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti was murdered by a group of Fascist after publicly condemning the corruption of the 1924 election.

³⁰ Frank Rosengarten (1968). *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press*. Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University.

³¹ Ibid, p.39. As previously stated, Donati was exiled and moved to Paris where he became one of the major contributors to the anti-Fascist foreign Press. However, the mandatory exile and the distance from his family took a hard toll on his health. Giuseppe Donati died a poor man in Paris, without ever seeing his family again.

³² Ibid, p.38.

³³ Loc. cit.

³⁴ Loc. Cit.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 39.

³⁶ “Da gran tempo si e' usato comunemente di chiamare Cristo con l'appellativo di Re per il sommo grado di eccellenza, che ha in modo sovraeminente fra tutte le cose create. In tal modo, infatti, si dice che Egli regna...nelle volonta' degli uomini, sia perche' in lui alla santita' della volonta' divina risponde la perfetta integrita' e sottomissione della volonta' umana, sia perche' con le sue ispirazioni influisce sulla libera volonta' nostra da infiammarci verso le piu' nobili cose.”Pius XI (11 December 1925). *Quas Primas*

³⁷ “Da questa dottrina dei sacri libri venne per conseguenza che la Chiesa, regno di Cristo sulla terra , destinato naturalmente ad estendersi a tutti gli uomini e a tutte le nazioni, saluto' e proclamo' nel ciclo anno della liturgia il suo autore e fondatore quale Signore sovrano e Re dei re, moltiplicano le forme della sua affettuaosa venerazione.” Loc. Cit.

³⁸“D'altra parte sbaglierebbe gravemente chi togliesse a Cristo Uomo il potere su tutte le cose temporali, dato che Egli ha ricevuto dal Padre un diritto assoluto su tutte le cose create, in modo che tutto soggiaccia al suo arbitrio. Tuttavia, finche' fu sulla terra si astenne completamente dall'esercitare tale potere, e come una volta disprezzo' il possesso e la cura delle cose umane, cosi' premise e permette che i possessori debitamente se ne servano”. Loc. Cit.

³⁹ “Non rifiutino, dunque, I capi delle nazioni di prestare pubblica testimonianza di riverenza e di obbedienza all'impero di Cristo isieme coi loro popoli, se vogliono, con l'incolumita' del loor potere, l'incremento e il progresso della patria...Se invece gli uomini privatamente e in pubblico avranno riconosciuto la sovrana potesta' di Cristo, necessariamente segnalati benefici di giusta liberta', di tranquilla disciplina e di pacifica concordia pervaderanno l'intero consorzio umano... In tal modo...fiorira' e si consolidera' l'ordine e la tranquillita': ancorche', infatti, il cittadino riscontri nei principi e nei capi di Stato uomini simili a lui o per qualche ragione indegni o vituperevoli, non si sottrarra' tuttavia al loro commando, qualora egli riconosca in essi l'immagine e l'autorita' do Cristo e Uomo”. Loc. Cit.

⁴⁰“Col tributare questi onori alla dignita' regia di nostro Signore, si richiamera' necessariamente al pensiero di tutti che la Chiesa, essendo stata stabilita da Cristo come societa' perfetta, richiede per proprio diritto, a cui non puo' rinunciare, piene liberta' e indipendenza dal potere civile, e che essa, nell'esercizio del suo divino ministreo di insegnare, reggere e condurre alla felicita' esterne tutti coloro che appartengono al Regno di Cristo, no puo' dipendere dall'altrui arbitrio”. Loc. Cit.

⁴¹ “influenza del cattolicesimo nella vita italiana”. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 25 April, 1926.

⁴² “artificioso e demagogico sdoppiamento in un paese di credenti, della coscienza individuale da quella collettiva mascherata di indifferenza, di ateismo, di antireligione”. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 25 April, 1926.

⁴³ “ritorno alla coerenza religiosa e spirituale di un popolo per prevvida volonta' dei pubblici poteri.”

L'osservatore Romano, 25 April, 1926.

⁴⁴ “...accentrare la piu' attiva sorveglianza per l'osservanza di quanto e' stato disposto”. *L'osservatore Romano*, 3 July, 1926.

⁴⁵ On 1 January, 1927, a special tax was imposed upon single men, ages 25 to 65. The profits from this tax were given to Opera Nazionale per la Protezione della Maternita' e dell'Infanzia (the National Protection of Maternity and Infancy). In *L'Osservatore Romano*, 8 December 1926.

- ⁴⁶ “sente il gravissimo obbligo di essere in ogni suo atto riverente, docile, come fece sin qui, ai pubblici poteri legittimamente costituiti e conseguente al presente regime”. *Civiltà Cattolica*, December 4, 1926.
- ⁴⁷ “Imponentissima cerimonia”, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 3 December 1926.
- ⁴⁸ Another interesting short article praised Mussolini and the Under-Secretary for Public Instructions for supporting morally and financially a campaign against the use of blasphemous language. In *L'Osservatore Romano*, 4 December, 1926.
- ⁴⁹ “...si tenga presente che ledono la morale tutte le opere contrarie ai sentimenti etici e famigliari della popolazione italiana, anche se mascherate dal pretesto pseudo-romantico dell'ardimento artistico...in un paese cattolico, la restaurazione dei valori morali non puo' farsi prescindendo dagli insegnamenti della religione”. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 3 December, 1926.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid*, par. 24.
- ⁵¹ The speech was delivered on 16 November, 1922.
- ⁵² Montanelli, I., Cervi M. (1998). *L'Italia del Novecento*. Milano: Rizzoli.
- ⁵³ Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Societa' Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza, p.46.
- ⁵⁴ One could argue that these provision gave the Fascist regime a degree of indirect control over the Catholic Press.
- ⁵⁵ Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Societa' Contemporanea*. Bari: Editori Laterza, p.47.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 41.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 41.
- ⁵⁸ *Organizzazione di Vigilanza Repressione dell'Antifascismo* or the Organization for Vigilance Against Anti-Fascism.
- ⁵⁹ A longer discussion of this topic can be found in chapter three.
- ⁶⁰ “Questa condotta, questa tattica...deve cessare, per quello stesso desiderio di porre a lasciare l'autorità giudiziaria in un ambiente di altissimo prestigio e per la necessita' stessa che nessuna Pressione esteriore, che nessuna influenza politica possa valere sui doveri e sui diritti della magistratura”. *L'Osservatore Romano*, June 25, 1924, p.2.
- ⁶¹ *Loc. Cit.*
- ⁶² State Counsellor.
- ⁶³ Brother of the future Pope, Pius XII.
- ⁶⁴ F. Monteleone (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio, p.89.
- ⁶⁵ From June 1927 to January 1928 and from April to May 1928.
- ⁶⁶ As was noted earlier, the Balillas were groups of young Fascist organizations designed to propagate Mussolini's ideals among the youth and educate them to become active members of the party.
- ⁶⁷ “Con l'ascesa del potere di Benito Mussolini, ebbi chiaro il presentimento che fosse giunta l'ora propizia. Capii che con lui potevo intendermi; entrambi figli del popolo, amavamo il nostro paese con la stessa semplicità e la medesima schiettezza, al di sopra di ogni spirito fazioso e di ogni altro interesse. Non lo conoscevo ancora personalmente, ma avevo fiducia in lui”.
- ⁶⁸ “ Con profonda fede nella missione religiosa e cattolica del popolo italiano, il governo Fascista ha proceduto metodicamente, con una serie di atti amministrativi e di provvedimenti legislative, a restituire allo Stato e alla nazione italiana quel carattere di Stato cattolico e di nazione cattolica che la politica liberale si era sforzata, durante lunghi anni, di cancellare”. In F. Monteleone (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio, p.88.
- ⁶⁹ Article 1 of the Treaty. A law was passed that recognized the religious freedom of other beliefs, but it was never fully implemented. During the war, it was completely ignored and other religions experienced outright persecution by the state and the Church.
- ⁷⁰ Article 2 of the treaty.
- ⁷¹ “L'Italia, considerando sacra ed inviolabile la persona del Sommo Pontefice, dichiara impunitibile l'attentato contro di Essa...punite come le offese e le ingiurie alla persona del Re”.
- ⁷² The Roman Question.
- ⁷³ The Italian State agreed to give to the new Catholic state one million Italian liras for all the losses incurred by the Vatican during and after the First World War.
- ⁷⁴ Article 3 of the Concordat.
- ⁷⁵ Article 8 of the Concordat.
- ⁷⁶ Article 9 of the Concordat.

⁷⁷ Article 12 of the Concordat.

⁷⁸ “Davanti a Dio e sui Santi Vangeli, io giuro e prometto, siccome conviene ad un Vescovo, fedelta’ allo Stato Italiano. Io giuro e prometto di far rispettare dal mio clero il Re ed il Governo stabilito secondo le leggi costituzionali dello Stato. Io giuro e prometto inoltre che non partecipero’ ad alcun accordo ne’ assistero’ ad alcun consiglio che possa recar danno allo Stato italiano ed all’ordine pubblico e che non permettero’ al mio clero simili partecipazioni. Preoccupandomi del bene dell’interesse dello Stato italiano cerchero’ di evitare ogni danno che possa minacciarlo”.

⁷⁹ “Lo Stato italiano, volendo ridonare all’istituto del matrimonio, che e’ base della famiglia, dignita’ conforme alle tradizioni cattoliche del suo popolo, riconosce al sacramento del matrimonio, disiplinaryato dal diritto canonico, gli effetti civili”.

⁸⁰ Article 35 of the concordat.

⁸¹ “L’Italia considera fondamento e coronamento dell’istruzione pubblica l’insegnamento della dottrina cristiana secondo la forma ricevuta dalla tradizione cattolica. E perciò consente che l’insegnamento religioso ora impartito nelle scuole pubbliche elementari abbia un ulteriore sviluppo nelle scuole medie, secondo programmi da stabilirsi d’accordo tra la Santa Sede e lo Stato”.

⁸² “Lo Stato italiano riconosce le organizzazioni dipendenti dall’Azione Cattolica Italiana, in quanto esse, siccome la Santa Sede ha disposto, svolgono la loro attivita’ al di fuori di ogni partito politico e sotto l’immediata dipendenza della gerarchia della Chiesa per la diffusione e l’attuazione dei principi cattolici. La Santa Sede prende l’occasione della stipulazione del presente concordato per rinnovare a tutti gli ecclesiastici e religiosi d’Italia il divieto di iscriversi e militare in qualsiasi partito politico”.

⁸³ “...di riconciliazione non tanto di due ‘Alte Parti’, di due sovranita’, di due stati o governi fra di loro, quanto di tutta una societa’ con Dio, mediante il suo Rappresentante in terra”. *L’Osservatore Romano*, 12 February 1929.

⁸⁴ “dietro ognuno di voi non possiamo astenerci dal vedere I vostri rispettivi sovrani...e con loro I vostri governi, I vostri popoli, I vostri paesi tutti interi, tutti insieme: una visione di grandezza veramente apocalittica, di una immensita’ mondiale”. Private address of Pius XI to the Corpo Diplomatico, *Le Garanzie dei Patti Lateranensi*, 9 March, 1929.

⁸⁵ 30 March 1929 and 31 March 1929.

⁸⁶ “padre di fronte a figli, risoluto a ridare Iddio all’Italia e l’Italia a Dio”. Saturday 30 March 1929.

⁸⁷ “Un’altra voce commovente e’ quella di coloro che soprattutto dall’Italia ci hanno fatto sapere: Noi ricominceremo a far Pasqua!”. *L’Osservatore Romano*, Sunday 31 March, 1929.

⁸⁸ “integrita’ politica ha ricevuto il suggello divino, senza del quale nessuna grandezza civile e’ completa”. *L’Osservatore Romano*, Sunday 31 March 1929.

⁸⁹ *New York Times*, 12 March 1929.

⁹⁰ *New York Times*, 26 May, 1929.

CHAPTER THREE

MUSSOLINI, ITALIAN BROADCASTING, AND THE PRESS, 1920's-1930: THE CENTRALIZATION OF FASCIST POWER.

“Gentlemen, I have no fetishes, and, when the interests of the nation are at stake, I don't even have the fetish of freedom. This is why, after some people have talked to me about freedom of the Press, I, who am a journalist, I have said that freedom is not only a right but a civic duty.”

Benito Mussolini

The objectives of post-war government that Mussolini promoted for the Italian people were the protection of the Italian lira, the “battle of the grain,”¹ and the campaign to increase the national birth rate. The Fascists were unsuccessful in accomplishing the first and only nominally effective in achieving the second. Grain production was indeed expanded but at the expense of other profitable products such as wine and oil. Mussolini was perhaps most successful in the propaganda campaign to encourage families to have more children, an objective for which he received the full support of the Catholic Church. On 12 February 1931 *Il Giornale d'Italia* reported:

With a truly Fascist sense of satisfaction we are now able to state, data at hand, that the past year, 1930, has been the best demographic year of the regime: 298,755 newborns compared to 149,831 in 1929.²

During the 1930's and leading into Italy's involvement in the war, Mussolini's totalitarian vision was spread through every aspect of Italian society, from the creation of a special apparatus for youth's indoctrination to the consolidation of broadcasting and the suppression of the free Press.

By the end of the 1920's, Victor Emmanuel had lost all influence over the nation's domestic and international life. On the other hand, Mussolini managed to create both domestically and abroad the image of a benevolent leader who was helping the

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country modernize after the ineffective governance of the multiparty system. On 20 January 1927, Winston Churchill referred to Mussolini, saying 'his only thought is the enduring welfare of the Italian people.'³ In reality, every government apparatus became a tool for the Fascist dictator, who even asserted his power over the Monarchy and the selection to the throne.

One such manifestation of the new Fascist totalitarianism was the creation of the *OVRA*⁴ and the *Tribunale Speciale*⁵ for national security. As a means to bypass and undermine the Magistrate's authority, the *Tribunale Speciale* was extremely successful. Between 1926 and 1929, it put on trial 5,046 people, including many representatives of the Italian anti-Fascist Press.⁶ One thousand people were found guilty and an indeterminate number was exiled. Among those found guilty, punishment ranged from the death penalty to thirty-five years in prison, with some lighter sentences.⁷

Legal developments in the Fascist Press

With his background as editor of first the socialist newspaper *Avanti* and later the *Popolo d'Italia*, Mussolini was well aware of the media's power and pervasiveness in the Italian society. He believed that the Press should not be a vehicle of information but rather a means of mass persuasion. During his twenty-year regime, he controlled all the elements of the mass media. His success with radio and the official Press was total;⁸ the film industry was controlled through the *LUCE* films.⁹

Piero Ottone makes the point that Italian journalism had never adopted the same critical independence from the political system as the foreign Press, especially the British and the American. Whether conservative like Times or liberal like the Guardian, Great Britain's newspapers maintained a professional ethic; the editorial page had political

opinions but the factual reporting attempted to be absolutely unbiased. Italian newspapers, instead, had been used as vehicles of expression for the editors' and owners' political views. It would follow that Fascism would have fallen easily into step with this formula. The main difference would have rested on the fact that now the only political views to be represented and supported were Mussolini's. The Press had "not changed its nature but its owner".¹⁰

Regardless, the biggest obstacle to Mussolini's efforts to suppress the free Press was the edict on the Press promulgated on 26 March 1848 by King Charles-Albert of Sardinia-Piedmont.¹¹ The Albertine edict began by stating that freedom of the Press was 'a necessary guarantee for the institutions of every well-ordered representative government' and that this freedom 'must be upheld and protected in such a way as to assure its beneficial effects'.¹² The edict became the legal apparatus supporting the notion of an Italian free Press from the unification of Italy in 1870 until the advent of the Fascist repressions. Although the Albertine edict did include very specific restrictions on the print Press and left a large margin of control to the government, it was nevertheless a guarantee that newspapers could represent the wide-ranging views of the Italian political life.¹³

On 15 July 1923 King Victor Emmanuel III signed Royal Decree N. 3288, the first of a series of legal provisions intended to modify the Albertine edict and, eventually, to lead to the suppression of the free Press.¹⁴ The decree was proposed by Mussolini and by two of his most faithful allies, the Ministers of Interior and Justice, Luigi Federzoni and Alfredo Rocco.¹⁵ They claimed that the 1848 edict failed to hold responsible the "*gerente responsabile*", (managing editor) of the newspaper. According to the Fascist

politicians, on many occasions anti-Fascist newspapers had insulted the existing government and had gotten away with it because of a weak legal apparatus. Such newspapers had hired bogus *gerenti responsabili* who were being paid very well for risking fines and imprisonment, while the real culprits remained free to continue their subversive behaviour. As the historian Rosengarten points out,

The Italian state and nation had been exposed to grave danger by the excesses of anti-Fascist newspapers, which were undermining public confidence in the government and demeaning the prestige of Italian political and religious institutions.¹⁶

Article one in R.D. Nr. 3288 stated that from that point onward, the *gerente responsabile*,

Must be the director or one of the principal editors of the newspaper or publication and must obtain the official approval of the Prefect of the province where the newspaper or publication is printed.¹⁷

This was a significant victory for the Fascists, because it guaranteed absolute executive power over the Press to the Prefect of each province. Because such people were chosen specifically for their unwavering loyalty to the regime, the implications are obvious.

Specifically, Article two stated that the Prefects could issue an injunction to the newspapers in the following cases:

- (a) If the newspaper or other publication with false or tendentious news hampers the diplomatic action of the government in its relations with other powers or damages national prestige within Italy or abroad or arouses alarm among the population or causes a disturbance of public order;
- (b) If the newspaper or other publication with articles, comments, notes, headlines, illustrations, or cartoons instigates the commission of crimes or provokes class hatred or disobedience of the laws or the orders of the authorities or interferes with the discipline of public employees or favours the interests of

foreign states, organizations, or individuals to the detriment of Italian interests or insults the Fatherland, the King, the Royal Family, the Pontiff, the Religion of the State, the institution and power of the State or of friendly powers...¹⁸

Although the Fascist party had been born in 1922 as an anti-Church entity, the inclusion of the Pope and the Catholic Church in the decree are extremely significant and lend validity to the claim that both Mussolini and Pope Pius XI could see the benefits of such an alliance. Further, Article four of the decree affirmed that if the newspaper refused the injunction,

The newspapers or other writings published in illegal defiance of the regulations in Article two are to be confiscated. The confiscation is to be carried out by the persons responsible for public security without requiring any special authorization. Those guilty of the abusive publications are to be punished according to the existing laws.¹⁹

The Catholic Church, could, hypothetically, take advantage of the government's police power to take care of anti-religious publications without getting directly involved in such "secular" matters. Although evidence to support this statement is difficult to find, the probability that such instances occurred is high. After all, only a few years later, in 1926, the Lateran Accords solidified the agreements between the newfound Vatican state and the existing regime. As it has been noted before, the silent casualties of this process were the Popular Party and various non-desirable members of that party.

On 10 July 1924 King Victor Emmanuel passed Royal Decree Nr. 1028, which was intended to intensify the regime's control over the Press even more, in light of the strong anti-Fascist Press campaign following the Matteotti murder.²⁰ A year later, on 31 December 1925, another law was passed, "Regulations Pertaining to the Periodical Press." In summary, this law demanded that the 'director or managing director [of every

periodical publication] must be listed in the professional directory of journalists.’²¹ Also, all managing editors should ‘obtain official approval of the attorney-general of the Court of Appeals under whose jurisdiction the newspaper or periodical is printed.’²² Finally, Article one stated that the attorney-general could revoke his official approval at any time if the newspaper or people involved in the newspaper’s publication had been convicted twice of a crime by ‘means of the Press.’²³ Article two of the law reiterated that the attorney-general needed to know the identity of the *gerente responsabile* and article three stated that,

the printer and publisher of a newspaper or periodical must present to the attorney-general a declaration containing the vital statistics of all the owners of the newspaper or periodical [and indicate the addresses] of their place of business and their private residence. ²⁴

The most significant section of the new law however, dealt with

the institution of an Order of Journalists that will have its offices in cities where there exists a Court of Appeals. The Order will establish its professional directives that will be deposited at the chancelleries of the Courts of Appeal. The practice of the profession of journalism is allowed only to those whose names are listed in the directories.²⁵

The Order of Journalists was simply the first step toward the establishment of a National Fascist Syndicate of Journalists, which happened on 7 April, 1927 with Law Nr. 2307. Later in the year, another decree included the owners and publishers of newspapers by creating the National Fascist Association of Newspaper Publishers as a part of the National Fascist Confederation of Industrialists.²⁶ The objective of this association was to

safeguard the general welfare of the industry for which it is constituted and to favour the industry's technical and economic development in harmony with the general interests of the nation and of its productive activity.²⁷

Minister Rocco executed the last step toward the complete centralization of Fascist power over the Press on 1 May 1929. On this day, he announced to the Senate the creation of a High Commission for the Press that was intended to "fine tune" and finish structuring the legal organization of the journalistic profession. Such an absolute tool of power could only be put in the hands of an especially trusted party member; not surprisingly, the honour went to Arnaldo Mussolini, the dictator's brother.²⁸ Alfredo Rocco praised the new government entity to the Senate:

the anarchic irresponsibility of pre-Fascist journalism [had been replaced by] a sense of responsibility and duty...Freedom of the Press is not hindered by the establishment of moral and intellectual requirements for the practice of journalism.²⁹

The new phase of complete Fascist hegemony over the Italian Press was now complete. Despite the fierce and brave opposition of many anti-Fascist newspapers, Mussolini's totalitarian ideology was implemented brutally and violently. After having secured the legal framework to control the Press, he did not hesitate to use other strategies to ensure Fascist dominance. Here are only a few examples of a phenomenon that destroyed many newspapers and caused the deaths of many anti-Fascist intellectuals: on 1 April 1919 a group of black shirts invaded and destroyed the offices of the Socialist newspaper *Avanti* in Milan; and on 27 February 1921 they destroyed *L'Azione Comunista* in Florence and murdered the newspaper's editor, Spartaco Lavagnini. These terror tactics were implemented all over Italy until 1926, when the regime was more confident of its power.³⁰

Vatican communications and Fascism

An interesting phenomenon took place within the Catholic world during the 1920's and the 1930's. Fascism caused a fracture in the collective consciousness of Catholic publications, destroying the unified front that the Pope had been trying so hard to project by presenting the Church as the only entity capable of restoring order in the world. At times, even the Vatican's highest authorities made contrasting denouncements in the Press. Significantly, Pope Pius XI, notwithstanding his expressed admiration of Mussolini, made several statements criticizing Fascism's totalitarian dimension.³¹ Catholics everywhere became a mirror of this fracture, some enthusiastically adhering to the wave of nationalism brought forth by the black shirts, others denying the new regime as intrinsically and unquestionably anti-Catholic.

L'Osservatore Romano was the Vatican's official news organ. Other Catholic newspapers took a different stance and paid dearly for it. As was noted in the previous chapter, Giuseppe Donati, managing editor of the Catholic newspaper *Il Popolo* had been exiled to Paris in 1925. There, he met many other exiled journalists, among whom were the reformist socialists Carlo Prato and Francesco Frola, Ernesto Caporali of the Italian-general Confederation of Labour, and the republican Mario Pistocchi.³² As their leader, Donati created the most prominent émigré' anti-Fascist publication, *Il Corriere degli Italiani*. The first issue came out on 28 January 1926 and displayed on its front page the sentence, 'This newspaper is published in Paris, because Fascism has suppressed freedom of the Press in Italy.'³³ As Rosengarten acutely points out, in an article published on 15 March, 1926, Donati spoke of the only type of anti-Fascism that could overthrow the

current regime, one that would be seen years later, in 1945, during the Resistance movement:

For us, anti-Fascism is a unitary movement that arises from the consciousness of men who share a minimum common denominator of idealism and will direct toward the achievement of civil rights. The struggle for civil rights is the basis of anti-Fascism; without this common basis, the life and therefore the propaganda, the organization and the struggle of parties, from the liberals to the anarchists, will never be possible in Italy, as it is not possible now...For us, whoever struggles against Fascism, even if outside our ideological and tactical framework, is not a competitor, but an ally.³⁴

In conclusion, Fascism was relatively successful in exerting control over the Press. While some other reputable journalists and publishers chose to resign³⁵ rather than be subjected to Fascist control, many of those working in the media joined the party and kept their jobs. Franco Monteleone and Piero Ottone both bring up the point that, arguably, some of them may have been inspired by the new wave of nationalism and progress that Mussolini was so eager to project and may have held a sincere hope for Italy's future as an Imperial power; others were simply trying to survive by obeying the ever-increasing party demands with a certain dose of cynicism.³⁶ Most of the anti-Fascist Press migrated to Paris and organized the nucleus of the opposition to Mussolini.³⁷

Legal developments in Fascist broadcasting

During the first half of the 1930's, the *Istituto di Ricostruzione Industriale* (IRI)³⁸ group guided by Fascist-appointed Giancarlo Vallauri³⁹ managed to promote the development of radio and diffuse its popularity among the Italian masses. It wasn't until the middle of the 1930's and the invasion of Ethiopia that radio was to become fully integrated into the developing of an Italian propaganda machine.⁴⁰ After his imperial

successes, Mussolini enjoyed a high degree of prestige among the population. Many Italians accepted Fascism; the dictator created, through the use of radio, cinema, and the Press, the beginning of a mass culture. He worked on instilling in the Italian people, a poor and largely still peasant population, the belief that they would not have to suffer any longer from the worldwide economic crisis. Fascism was there to take care of its people, to protect them from the weaknesses of democracy and the rampant threat of Communism, and to foster the established ideals of a simple, rural Italian life.⁴¹

From 1935 until the beginning of the Second World War in 1939, Mussolini accelerated the development of the Italian propaganda machine by implementing a series of stricter legal provisions affecting the use of the broadcasting media. He had long been convinced that to transform Italy into a truly Fascist state it was necessary to create a systematic propaganda apparatus. In 1934 he had created the *Sottosegretariato per la Stampa e la Propaganda*,⁴² which was placed directly under his control. In 1935 this entity was transformed into the *Ministero della Stampa e della Propaganda*,⁴³ the powers of which extended to most aspects of EIAR management, including control over programming. The Ministry of Communications was left with the technical aspects of radio broadcasting.⁴⁴ Mussolini's aim to strengthen state control over radio was also evident in 1934 when he abolished the Committee of Vigilance, which was no longer deemed fit to serve the regime's interests. In its place, and with the aim of "simplifying" the committee, Royal Decree Nr. 1989 called for the creation of a commission composed of only four members, two artistic experts, a technical expert, and a fourth member decided by the *Sottosegretariato*. The commission's purpose was to 'set the artistic directives of EIAR and to supervise radio diffusion.'⁴⁵

The theme of “simplification” of the existing legal apparatus was one that Mussolini used to centralize his control over all areas of communication, including cinema and the Press. By creating specific legal entities to foster and expand Fascist propaganda, he had a twofold intent: domestically, he wanted to educate the Italian people to follow the Fascist doctrine in both thought and behaviour; internationally, he intended to project the image of a strong, unified, and patriotic Italy.⁴⁶

In 1936, on the basis of Law Nr. 336 (1933), the first comprehensive Postal Code was put into effect with Royal Decree Nr. 645. Dealing with posts, telegraphy, telephonic, radio and television communication the Postal Code would outlive Fascism itself. It was supposed to, again, simplify and unify in one single law the legislation relative to broadcasting. As a summarizing body of legislative precedents, the Postal Code did not contain any surprises.⁴⁷ The fundamental principles of radio within the Postal Code were the following: state ownership of the postal service and telecommunications (including radio and television); the concession to be given by the state to a private radio/television company for a pre-agreed length of time; finally, state control over that radio/television company.⁴⁸

In 1937 the *Ministero per la Stampa e la Propaganda* was transformed into the *Ministero per la Cultura Popolare*⁴⁹ to integrate the Fascist concept of culture in Mussolini’s state. Also in 1937, Royal Decree Nr. 571 called for the establishment of an *Ispettorato per la Radiodiffusione e la Televisione*⁵⁰ within the Ministry of Popular Culture. The goals of the *Ispettorato* were to ‘...coordinate all activities attributed to the Ministry concerning radio diffusion and television, to promote its development, and to supervise over all other entities belonging to that field.’⁵¹

The *Ispettorato* was also created to bring some order to the field of communication and to minimize the rivalries existing among the state organizations, namely the Ministries of Posts/Telegraphs and Communication, which shared responsibilities over radio. The members of the new government body were chosen personally by Mussolini and its control commission was composed of various other government agency members. A special functionary was put in charge of supervising radio. He had to be elected by the government, the Ministry of Finance, Popular Culture and Communication and was given the same managerial powers of other general directors inside EIAR. Finally, the *Ispettorato* would supervise all other organizations dealing with radio transmission.

With the change in the electronic media's legal infrastructure, the totalitarian state was able to take control over all EIAR activities in a very short time. However, in terms of unifying EIAR's management, its central body was still divided because the Department of Propaganda Services remained under the Radio Section, a branch created to implement domestic propaganda as well as to counter that of anti-Fascist clandestines in Italy and abroad.

Up until 1940, Italian foreign policy to some extent could be judged as being successful from a Fascist perspective in that it had managed to expand its empire in Africa, including a successful war with Abyssinia. But from 1940 to 1943, with Italy's inability to expand eastward and into Africa, audiences became increasingly more sceptical. Moreover the government was getting increasingly concerned about foreign radio stations broadcasting anti-Fascist propaganda, especially Radio London and Radio Moscow. The Ministry of Press and Propaganda had already forbidden citizens to listen

to foreign radio shows in 1935, but it was not until 1938 that the foreign stations, such as the BBC's Italian Service, offered foreign programs and thus increased in popularity.⁵²

Technical Developments in Italian Broadcasting

During the 1920's and even after URI was transformed into EIAR, the Italian radio experience could not be compared to that of other European countries such as Great Britain or Germany, which were more highly industrialized and economically advanced. Rather, it was limited to a very small segment of the population, those who could be considered development pioneers. The reasons for the slow speed at which radio was diffused among the population are many. On one hand, the Press was not cooperating by not publishing a program schedule; on the other, the cost of radio receivers was still prohibitive for a poor and still largely illiterate peasant population. In addition to purchasing a receiver, families also had to pay the subscription fee, the *canone*, and the related tax. Interestingly enough, Mussolini did not, as a newspaper man, have the same confidence in radio propaganda as he did in the Press. Putting his hopes in the LUCE newsreels and feature films, he did not provide the resources to build a cheap radio receiver. Finally, more radio stations were needed around the country to ensure wider signal distribution. While this last obstacle was overcome with the creation of more transmission centres, the other problems remained points of contention for a long time.⁵³

A large majority of the listening audience refused to pay the infamous *canone*, the subscription fee demanded by the government of every radio owner. The phenomenon was extremely widespread and starting in 1933, many Italian newspapers published editorials expressing the opinion that such fees should be eliminated or at the very least reduced considerably.⁵⁴ From a governmental standpoint, however, such fees were

necessary not only for the technical expansion of the new communication medium, but also, essentially, for its very survival. The dilemma was finally resolved when the fee was reduced and then remained stationary. In addition, as the programs became more entertaining and less experimental and the first radio personalities conquered the collective heart of the country, Italians became more willing to make the extra sacrifice of including radio expenses in their budgets.

In an effort to promote the expansion of radio memberships in the more rural areas, EIAR created the *Ente Radio Rurale*, a special series of projects designed with this specific intent. The key players were the *Pionieri*,⁵⁵ a group of individuals in charge of such promotions. They were generally teachers, professionals, and local priests who operated under EIAR's Office of Propaganda and Development in five specific geographic locations: Turin for Piedmont, Milan for the rest of Northern Italy, Genoa for Liguria, Rome for central Italy and Sardinia, Naples for the South and for Sicily.⁵⁶

The phenomenon of the *Pioniere* is interesting and deserves special attention. These people were educators, artists, professionals and, as was noted above, even local priests. Working under the regime's strict supervision through EIAR, they offered a different level of propaganda, an immediate and direct approach that could reach areas never before intimately touched by the regime's official propaganda. One could call it a "door-to-door method" where the *Pionieri* directly contacted the people in their communities and exhorted them to buy radios and to pay the taxes. The following letter is a perfect example of this technique. A particular *Pioniere* described his approach as follows:

Dear Sir, as you look closely at this letter you will doubtlessly be convinced of the colossal and important activity done by EIAR through Radio, the prodigious

medium of our century that keeps us minutely informed of the daily events of the nation, one that can be pleasant and useful to all categories of people, for various and varied cultural and commercial communications.... [and to report on] ceremonies [where we can hear about] the most loved personalities of our country. Why then, should you deny yourself of this indispensable medium, faithful companion of children and adults? Do not hesitate! Buy a radio and you will have the pleasure, like many others, of participating in events happening all over the world. I send my best regards and already consider you a member of the EIAR family...⁵⁷

Mussolini was well-aware, however, that expectations of success for radio sales and for new subscribers had to be realistic. In this, he differed greatly from Hitler who had demanded “a radio in every home.” Instead, the Fascist dictator demanded “a radio in every village.”⁵⁸ Throughout the 1920’s and into the 1930’s the radio experience had a collective dimension, bringing together people of different social strata, willingly or not, when listening in public places; although class divisions were certainly still strong, servants might be invited by their masters to join them or they would engage in “clandestine listening” when their masters were not at home. If nothing else, all social classes were exposed to the same message; this collective dimension was not lost on the Catholic Church. Although initially very suspicious of the new medium’s potentially immoral dimension, Church authorities came to realize quickly radio’s evangelistic potential.⁵⁹ Religious programs appeared on EIAR stations at first and on *Radio Vaticana* after 1931.

One of the ways to both foster the listening experience and to praise the regime came with the expansion of EIAR radio stations. Fascist broadcasters created solemn occasions surrounding the openings of new radio stations and other official occurrences.

Radio Milano, for instance, was established in 1925. The following passage demonstrates this objective in the speaker's tribute to Mussolini:

Starting officially the broadcasts from *Radio Milano*, URI hopes that that the Honourable President of the Council Benito Mussolini will be listening: to Benito Mussolini, URI and all its employees offer a deferential salute made of gratitude and admiration, to him who wants Italians to be cultured, with healthy hearts and light spirits, he who wants a strong and feared Italy, to him who is the hope and the fortune of our country.⁶⁰

Radio Milano was followed by *Radio Napoli* (1926), *Radio Bolzano* and *Genova* (1928), and *Radio Torino* in 1929. All the stations had centralized news programming through the *Stefani* agency.

ELAR made various other attempts to promote radio sales. One was the creation of an inexpensive radio, a machine that would be custom-made for the Italian masses who could not afford more expensive models. The first in this series was *RadioBalilla*, which was followed by many others. Regardless of the model, the problems remained the same, namely the insufficient number of transmitters and transmitter sites to adequately cover the country and, most importantly, radio's prohibitive costs. Some of the Italian newspapers⁶¹ expressed the opinion that the industrialists who had the monopoly over the radio construction were not particularly interested in cutting their profit margins in favour of the people. They were probably right. The regime was left with only one solution: the reduction of costs in order to avoid, as Isola points out,

that at the end of the year, in reviewing one's expenses, between buying the radio, miscellaneous repairs, taxes, etc. one would realize that they could have built a house at the beach.⁶²

The only entities that received special treatment and extremely reduced fees in acquiring radios were schools, cultural institutes, and various organizations set up by the regime,

such as the youth groups, the National Association of War Invalids and the National Association of Fighters.⁶³ In the end, with the escalation of the hostilities the problem of radio costs and fees was put aside. The only type of adjustment the regime was able to make was a reduction of the subscription fees. As a consequence, the Fascist dream of “a radio in every village” never became a reality.⁶⁴

Developments in programming-the Fascist Press

In alignment with the full assimilation of culture and society into the new concept of the Fascist state, the Press could only become the regime’s primary and most utilized propaganda medium. As it was noted earlier, Mussolini understood the importance of the Press and personally formulated the primary concepts regarding the “new” face of Fascist journalism.⁶⁵ As Rosengarten notes, the Italian dictator made his first and perhaps most important pronouncement regarding the nature of journalism in response to a group of senators who had criticized his illiberal tactics, and in particular to Senator Luigi Albertini,⁶⁶ managing editor of the independent newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera*:⁶⁷

But, let’s understand each other, what is this liberalism, this practice of liberalism? Because, if there is someone who claims that in order to be a perfect liberal one must give freedom to a few hundred stupid, fanatical scoundrels, the freedom to ruin forty million Italians, I energetically refuse this freedom...Gentlemen, I have no fetishes, and, when the interests of the nation are at stake, I don’t even have the fetish of freedom. This is why, after some people have talked to me about freedom of the Press, I, who am a journalist, I have said that freedom is not only a right but a civic duty.⁶⁸

For the rest of the 1920’s and 1930’s Mussolini worked on solidifying his hold over the Press, giving a series of speeches that expressed the same themes shown above. On 2 February 1923 he stated to the Chamber of Deputies that,

The Fascist state not only defends itself, but attacks. And those who intend to defame the Fascist state abroad or to undermine it within Italy must realize that their trade involves very grave and unpredictable consequences.⁶⁹

This statement was a clear warning against dissenting voices in the Press. Those who dared to express diverging opinions were, as it has been shown, threatened, beaten, sometimes murdered, put in jail and tried under the Special Tribunal, or exiled. A year later, in 1924, the dubiously overwhelming victory of the Fascist party established the absolute, totalitarian state. Up until that date and before as well, in preparation for complete Fascist domination, the Press was restructured to become the regime's public relations machine.

Speaking to a group of journalists from Piedmont, Mussolini declared that journalism was 'noble when it did not serve clandestine...interests, when it was a weapon in defence of an ideal...journalism was a mission, an apostolate whose end was collaboration with the nation in building the Fascist state'.⁷⁰ The last speech worth mentioning is the one delivered on 10 October 1928 to the managing directors of Fascist newspapers. It is of paramount importance in light of the pervasive influence these people would have in Italian life until 1943 and the collapse of Fascism. Mussolini's mention of the *littorio* is also interesting. The *littorio* (lictor) was, in ancient Rome, an officer who bore the fasces as the insignia of his office. The fasces were a bundle of rods having among them an axe with the blade projecting, borne before Roman magistrates as a badge of authority. Thus Mussolini's *Fascisti* were supposed to typify obedience to the law as did the lictor in ancient Rome.⁷¹

In a totalitarian regime, as a regime that has arisen from a triumphant revolution must necessarily be, the Press is an element of this regime, a force in the service of this regime; in a unitary regime, the Press cannot remain outside this unity.

This is why all the Italian Press is Fascist and should feel proud to struggle compactly under the banner of the *Littorio*...second only to schools, newspaper are a society's most powerful ideological weapon because they circulate among the masses and perform their functions of providing information and moulding character. Why all this talk about the death of the free Press in Italy? The freest Press in the world is the Italian Press...Italian journalism is free because it serves only a cause and a regime.⁷²

Benito Mussolini's totalitarian ramblings were echoed by many of his loyal followers: the Ministers of Interior and Justice, Luigi Federzoni and Alfredo Rocco, Arnaldo Mussolini, the dictator's brother and editor of the Fascist *Il Popolo d'Italia*, Paolo Orano, Chair of the History of Journalism at the University of Perugia, Ermanno Amicucci, the general secretary of the National Fascist Syndicate of Journalists. These names were followed by others, journalists in various newspapers such as Piero Pedrazza of the *Camicia Nera* of Treviso, Stanis Ruinas of the *L'Impero* in Rome and many others.⁷³ One example of this type of propaganda can be observed in the writings of Arnaldo Mussolini in his newspaper:

Fascist newspapers...were fulfilling the real purposes of modern journalism, namely the discussion of serious problems and the instruction and education of the general public....Fascist newspapers had the obligation of becoming the source of moral and political principles, the most rapid vehicle for reaching the mentality of the whole people, the most suitable organism for stimulating, shaping, and educating the spirit of citizens.⁷⁴

Fascist newspapers countered the courageous attacks of the official and later clandestine anti-regime Press by following the party's directives resolutely and blindly. As it has been observed, these journalists' contributions were nothing more than mediocre, certainly not as gloriously suffocating as those of the head of government. The following passage shows the peaks of gross fanaticism that characterized the Italian

Fascist Press of the 1920's and 1930's. The writer's blatant religious fervour is reminiscent of the concept of papal infallibility and would have doubtlessly concerned Catholic authorities. Stanis Ruinas wrote:

The Duce has taught us the art of speaking clearly, without frills and stupid fears...prefects and the heads of local fasci are fallible men, and should not be given the power of life and death over journalists. There is only one infallible man in Italy: the Duce who always tells the truth. There is only one irreplaceable man in Italy: the Duce who is always right. All the others can make mistakes and can be replaced.⁷⁵

As the end of the 1930's approached, the Press Office, under the directives of the Ministry of Press and Propaganda, became even more specific in filtering the dissemination of news to the Press and to EIAR, reaching three directives per day in 1935.⁷⁶ The tone and format of the news were screened carefully; authorities did not hesitate to give orders that concerned even apparently 'insignificant news.'⁷⁷ On 8 November 1938 for example, one of the directives read: 'Lady Rachele Mussolini requests that the newspapers not concern themselves with her imminent private journey to Milan'.⁷⁸ More significant, however, were directives that dealt with international and national issues. On 23 November 1935, for instance, during the Ethiopian war, the Ministry sent the following directive to all Italian newspapers:

Do not speak of our military defeats on the Ethiopian front; give broad coverage to the news from Egypt on the anti-British movement there without, however, above all in headlines, giving the impression that we are pleased about this event; do not publish reports of our aerial bombardments in East Africa.⁷⁹

A few years later, on the eve of the Second World War, news directives clearly demonstrated Italy's affiliation with the Third Reich. On 3 July 1939, it stated: 'Complete solidarity with Germany on the question of Danzig.'⁸⁰ This type of overt

propaganda that completely ignored unfavourable news became the regime's demise. As the world conflict intensified and as it became obvious to the Italian masses that newspapers were nothing more than publicity machines for the regime, the Press and EIAR lost all their credibility.

Developments in programming-the Fascist radio

As radio became more pervasive in Italian society, experimental programming formats were created to try to reflect the interests of the masses. However, EIAR did not start conducting credible audience polls until 1939. Therefore, the only method for assessing a program's success was through the letters received by the stations from the fans. As it was noted before, all types of broadcasts contained propaganda elements aimed at glorifying the regime, even though this trend increased during the war years until, ultimately, radio lost all its credibility.

Some of the programs broadcast by EIAR, such as the *Commento ai fatti del giorno*⁸¹ and the *Giornale Radio*⁸² are clear examples of Mussolini's indoctrination objectives. However, assigning only a propagandistic element to radio programming of the 1920's would give a superficial analysis of the time. EIAR programmers followed the motto 'educate, instruct, entertain'⁸³ until radio was fully integrated in the Italian war effort. This mix of "enlightened" propaganda and entertainment served to charm the Italian people and to initially give the regime that façade of magnanimous benevolence that Mussolini was so eager to portray both domestically and internationally. The proliferation of music and entertainment was extremely successful among Italians but feared and condemned by the Catholic Church, which saw it as a form of weakening morality. Even though religious programs were given progressively more airtime on

ELAR, the Vatican wanted to ensure its own voice on the air, which eventually led to the inauguration of *Radio Vaticana* in 1929.

Some blatant examples of Fascism's glorification came from celebrities of the time, "unofficial voices of the regime". A famous musician and conductor, Pietro Mascagni, was one of Mussolini's main supporters among musicians. In a 1926 broadcast,⁸⁴ Mascagni sang the praises of Italian music, evoking the operas of great composers like Verdi. To the splendour of his music, Mascagni juxtaposed foreign contemporary music like jazz, which, he said, 'has ruined our youth'. Italian music instead had always been a clear manifestation of the nation's splendour, which was 'renewing itself in the most prodigious way'⁸⁵. Subtle but clear was the reference to the Fascist regime and the sentiment of patriotism it was supposed to evoke in the Italian people.

1926 also marked the first appearance on the air by a member of the royal family, Duke Emanuele Filiberto di Savoia. The radio broadcast was a blatant propaganda piece aimed at praising both the King and Mussolini. Using memories from the First World War battles of the Carso and the Piave, Duke Emanuele stated:

Fifteen years have passed, but time has not weakened the courage and ardour of our devout soldiers...under the enlightened guidance of the King and the wise conduct of the Duce [Italy] is rising toward a radiant destiny that certainly awaits it.⁸⁶

A new format that emerged in the 1920's was the "conversatori."⁸⁷ These radio personalities, predominantly men, were given ten minutes of air time to "converse" with the public on a variety of topics ranging from the arts to literature. The EIAR administration supported loyal representatives of the regime.⁸⁸ Even though some of

these broadcasts did not have an overt propaganda dimension, most contained elements of praise toward Mussolini's activities and the improvements to society brought forth by the regime.

One area in which Fascism promptly and consistently demonstrated interest was the "education" of the Italian youth. A number of organizations were created to compartmentalize young people, such as the "*Opera Nazionale Balilla*" (OnB). Radio's role from the beginning was to assist the regime in educating young minds according to Fascist ideology. The *Uno Qualunque, Il Giornalino Radiofonico del Fanciullo*⁸⁹ (1927), was the daily newspaper for young people. Starting with a report of significant daily events, it was followed by comments from the little Balillas regarding news happening in Italy and abroad. Also present in the program were references to the historic and religious calendars aimed at commemorating important dates in Fascist history and at affirming the Catholic faith. These propagandistic segments were followed by others with purely entertaining purposes, such as fairy tales, games, and songs.

One particular program offers a significant example of the regime's propaganda objectives. An "anonymous" child had expressed the desire to meet "il Duce" and was given the opportunity to speak on the air on the anniversary of the "march on Rome":

Today, in the fifth anniversary of the march on Rome, we must first remember with devout veneration all the Black Shirts who died for the cause of the Fascist revolution...now the Fascist regime has won all the battles...now foreigners come to Italy not only to see the ruins of the ancient power and the natural beauties of our nation, but also to admire the formidable work done in these five years by the Fascist Regime...We love our Duce above all else! Like God is loved. Like our country is loved.⁹⁰

As was noted in chapter two, negotiations toward the Lateran Pacts were underway in 1927. With regards to radio and youth, the Church had expressed grave concern that the new medium could seriously corrupt young minds. In fact in 1927 the *Giunta Lombarda* had, under strict orders from religious authorities, forbidden the installation of radio receivers in the homes of priests and in religious schools. *L'Osservatore Romano* had supported the decision and had published the entire communiqué⁹¹ defending the Church from accusations of non-progressive behaviour. Religious authorities were simply looking out to protect the innocence of the Italian youth.

In 1929, Pope Pius XI voiced this concern in the encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*:

More than ever nowadays an extended and careful vigilance is necessary, inasmuch as the dangers of moral and religious shipwreck are greater for inexperienced youth. Especially is this true of impious and immoral books, often diabolically circulated at low prices; of the cinema, which multiplies every kind of exhibition; and now also of the radio, which facilitates every kind of communication. These most powerful means of publicity, which can be of great utility for instruction and education when directed by sound principles, are only too often used as an incentive to evil passions and greed for gain.⁹²

The following year, the Pope expressed a similar concern in another encyclical, *Casti Connubii*⁹³:

For now, alas, not secretly nor undercover, but openly, with all sense of shame put aside, now by word again by writings, by theatrical productions of every kind, by romantic fiction, by amorous and frivolous novels, by cinematographs portraying vivid scenes, in addresses broadcast by radio telephony, in short by all the invention of modern science, the sanctity of marriage is trampled upon and derided; divorce, adultery, all the basest vices either are extolled or at least are depicted in such colours as to appear to be free of all reproach and infamy.⁹⁴

While radio was grouped, as it has been seen, with the other forms of mass media, its immediate impact and unprecedented pervasiveness could be more dangerous and at the same time more beneficial than any other medium of communication.

The monopoly over the education of the Italian youth was always a strong point of competition between the Fascists and the Church. Including religious elements in broadcasts aimed at the younger generations was one of the methods used by the regime to appease the Church and a point of mutual benefit for both parties. Obedience to the Church merged into obedience to the *patria*, or fatherland, the term adopted by the Fascists to express their Roman historical tradition and emphasize Mussolini's belief that he was the new Julius Caesar. Both advocated the type of control and conservatism needed by both entities to secure their hegemony.

Despite an apparent façade of glorification of womanhood for its bridal and maternal dimensions, women were truly considered an inferior element of society. In radio, only male voices were deemed appropriate to report the *Stefani* news, and radio programs reserved to women made up only ten minutes of airtime a day, even though they were the largest audience segment. Mussolini believed that a woman's role in life was to be a "sposa," or wife, and mother. For this reason, he did not think women should be well educated and established laws that made it difficult for them to obtain a higher education. Infamous among such provisions was the double tax for higher education and college imposed on the female population. Moreover, women's salaries were half the size of men's and women could not participate to Italy's political life by joining the Fascist Party or by voting. As the historian Luisa Tasca accurately points out, Fascism had an incredibly deleterious effect on the emancipation of women in society,

camouflaging discrimination against women behind the idea of the “protection of motherhood”⁹⁵

By the end of the 1930’s, it was established that women could not constitute more than 10 percent of the personnel of any medium or large company, while women were completely excluded from those with less than ten employees. This policy had dramatic effects on women’s employment outside the home as there had been 5 million women employed outside the home and 9.3 million housewives in 1921; by 1931, these numbers became 3.9 million employed in extra-domestic labour and 11.3 million housewives.⁹⁶

Pope Benedict XV was also strongly opposed to the concept of the modern emancipation of women and their participation in politics, another point of agreement between the Church and the regime. Fascism stopped the process toward the equalization of rights between the two sexes and forced the “weaker sex” to take a secondary, submissive position in society. As early as the 1920’s, radio helped to support and strengthen this perception. The following broadcast, aimed at a female audience, demeans the female population’s character, a clear propagandistic objective of the regime:

[When men write in] they do it with a very precise objective. They need the title of a book, a very serious bit of information... If they [women] have something negative to say they proclaim their full name with that desire to argue typical of the ‘feminists’ of twenty years ago, or of very ugly ladies who are, indeed, the ones who like to say unpleasant things.⁹⁷

All entertainment programs were under the close scrutiny of Leopoldo Zullo, head of the Office of Censorship within the Ministry of Popular Culture. As such, no program was allowed that could, in any way, ridicule the regime. Actually in the 1920’s and up to

the beginning of the war, humour and irony were used by Fascist air personalities to belittle those who opposed Mussolini's laws and provisions.

The presence of religious themes and religious personalities on EIAR in the 1920's and into the 1930's deserves special attention. Beginning in 1926, various priests had been featured on the radio to celebrate Catholic festivities, such as the VIII Franciscan Centenary by Father Vittorio Facchinetti and a special conversation entitled *The Solution to the Roman Question*, by Father Reginaldo Giuliani, who praised the Lateran Accords. All the radio stations devoted themselves to finding religious figures who could speak comfortably and eloquently on the air, discussing the teachings of Christ and other issues dealing with contemporary society: Turin found Monsignor Giocondo Fino, a music expert who was already employed by EIAR; Genoa employed the monk Teodosio da Voltri, preacher in the San Loranzo Cathedral; Bolzano used Father Candido B.M. Penso, Trieste Monsignor Giuseppe Petazzi, Florence Monsignor Emanuele Magri, Rome Domenico Franze', Bari Monsignor Francesco Calamita, Palermo Father Benedetto Caronia.⁹⁸

The most important of all religious radio personalities, and certainly the very first star of Italian radio was the Franciscan Father Vittorio Facchinetti. Speaking from the microphones of *Radio Milano*, the Franciscan was blessed with a strong voice and an articulate yet simple and engaging communication style. The Italian people responded with enthusiasm, clearly proving that Italy was still, intrinsically, a Catholic country. Letters continued to be the only tool to measure any program's success; Father Facchinetti's Sunday messages received thousands of letters of support as evidenced by the following examples:

I am almost eighty years old. The Church is far away, I have to walk there on a street full of cars that frighten me. I don't go often. But every Sunday morning I stand in front of our Radio and I listen to your word...it is so clear, so warm, it comes across so full of good wishes that it touches my heart.⁹⁹

To many such letters, Father Facchinetti, always faithful to the established authority of the Church and, as it will be shown, to the regime, sent this warning:

For the moment, I repeat, to satisfy the obligation of the Holy Mass, everyone is required to go to Church in person. Indeed very recently the Church has prohibited the broadcasting of music that used to accompany the Mass.¹⁰⁰

However, the historian Isola points out that, after reviewing the Sunday programs, this was probably not true as the music and the mass both remained on the air well into the 1930's and beyond. At this point, the Catholic Church allowed music to accompany mass despite the enormous technical difficulties and constraints of live broadcasts. Father Facchinetti was prone to taking liberties with certain information and current events, although he was always careful and eager to stay within the parameters of the established order.

One of the interesting dimensions of the Facchinetti phenomenon is that it created, in some instances, a shared listening experience among varied social classes. Some of the wealthier Italian families would allow their employees to stop working to listen to Father Facchinetti's Catholic message:

I must not forget our cleaning lady who is always asking me to let her listen to the explanation of the New Testament on Sunday. She is a very attentive and devoted listener.¹⁰¹

Even when that did not happen, which was the majority of the time, Facchinetti's words left a strong impact. Another employee from Milan wrote directly:

I am just a poor housekeeper who has the good fortune of listening to your good homilies almost every Sunday. I do the housework very quickly, and while the lady is at the mass, I listen joyfully to your words.¹⁰²

Listening also occurred in public places among workers and professionals and created occasions for conversations and discussions that, for once, transcended occurrences organized by the regime, which were always under the close surveillance of the secret police.¹⁰³ The audience was vast and varied, therefore, and the above-mentioned testimonials paint the image of a Catholic Italy, especially among the lower classes, who needed an outlet and a voice of hope to counter the grim realities of everyday life.

Father Facchinetti, the Franciscans and Fascism

Father Facchinetti was of paramount importance to the Fascist regime and extremely well-liked by Mussolini and his entourage because of his open proclamation of the rebirth, renewal, and resurgence of a strong Catholic Italian nation. The following passage is a typical example of Facchinetti's ability to incorporate propagandistic elements in his radio homilies.¹⁰⁴ Quoting from Matthew and referring to Jesus' teaching, "render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's," he stated:

What are our duties toward the civil Authorities who govern us in the name of God, since all power derives from Him? [Our duties] are reduced to three...respect, obedience, tribute. Respect because as I said, if all power comes from God, then those who are in power, such as the King, his ministers and the Head of government are worthy of our veneration and or our affection. We recognize, with happy exultance, dear friends, that the fulfilment of such a duty for us today, in Italy, is not a sacrifice but a reason for joy, is not a weight but an honour, is not a duty but a need; because this king is called Victor Emmanuel III, the glorious continuer of the heroic civil and religious traditions of the House of Savoy; and this Head of state is called Benito Mussolini, the man of Providence who has saved the Patria, has heightened its most sublime ideals, who has

cooperated magnificently with the Pope of the Conciliation, to give God to Italy and Italy to God...¹⁰⁵

Lost in his own rhetorical fervour, Facchinetti continued his praises in a style that is reminiscent of Mussolini's own speeches:

Obedience, as a consequence of respect and veneration, is the basis of the social order, the foundation of individual peace and of national security, the potent antidote against anarchy and bolshevism. Tribute: tribute of prayer, that God may assist, enlighten and protect the political, civil and military authorities from whom depend the well-being of the people and the tranquillity and greatness of the State; therefore, it is necessary that we pay taxes, including the fee for radio.¹⁰⁶

The open references to the Lateran Accords were a continuous theme for the Franciscan father and served as sources of inspiration for the homilies of many priests living in rural areas; again, another level of infiltration and indoctrination by a religious figure to benefit both the Church and the regime. Father Facchinetti declared that both entities had finally reached a mutual point of respect and cooperation after years of conflict:

[The Church] does not intervene in, unless she has been asked to, political happenings; once she has assured for herself a dignified independence, she does not demand or protest; she stays peaceful, serene and tranquil on the unbreakable rock upon which is seated the city of light and peace, and has her inviolable place in the vast empire of souls. The proof for you, Italians who listen, or Catholics of the world has been under your eyes since the day of the Conciliation and the signing of the Concordat.¹⁰⁷

The previous passage is also evidence, again, of Father Facchinetti's habit to take liberties with historical accuracy. That the Catholic Church did not like to intervene in political matters is, obviously, not true. One only has to think back to the Acerbo reform and the work of Catholic Action¹⁰⁸ as proof, or at the numerous warnings regarding the position of the Church in post-World War I Europe issued by Pope Benedict XV and

Pope Pius XI in their encyclicals. However, religious authorities were used to this duality in their official communications, whether those came from *L'Osservatore Romano*, from papal encyclicals or, later, from *Radio Vaticana*. The distinction between secular and spiritual matters was indeed advocated by both Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI who stated that the Church should primarily concern itself with the latter. The reality however, was much different. The Lateran Treaty and the other accommodations of the new Vatican state to the Fascist regime speak loudly and clearly to support this point.

As the totalitarian state became stronger into the 1930's and the path toward war seemed more real following Italy's infamous colonial expansionism, Facchinetti's praises of Mussolini became even more overt and fanatic. As Isola points out, 'attack to the state became also attack to religion, since Catholicism was now the religion of the state':¹⁰⁹

We must love the *Patria* for the immense benefits that she gives us in times of peace...Italy is a mother for each one of us. She protects us...with her wonderful army that represents one of the best attributes for a people who are austere, disciplined and harmonious, [an army] who is the power and the strength of an entire nation...¹¹⁰

Despite pretending to observe the Church's official position of neutrality and opposition toward the war, Father Facchinetti was nonetheless exultant about Fascist expansionism:

Nobody ignores the pressing motives, or the serious security and defence reasons of expansion and colonization that convinced our government to occupy Ethiopia; but we also know that the one who manages with so much wisdom our politics tried in every way possible to resolve diplomatically the inevitable conflict and to achieve our objectives peacefully...our colonial undertaking is necessary to give bread and work to the prolific inhabitants of a glorious nation...and to help, at the same time, the progressive development of a semi-barbaric population...¹¹¹

The silence of the religious hierarchies toward this type of grossly inaccurate and fervent support of the established authority could be interpreted in many ways. The Vatican may have agreed with the Franciscan father or it may have chosen to benefit indirectly from his Fascist propaganda; on the other hand, Pope Pius XI may have been embarrassed by the broadcasts but concerned about expressing dissenting views in the wake of the new-found, yet precarious, harmony with the state. Regardless of what one may choose to believe, one fact is indisputable: the apparent success of Father Facchinetti's articulation of his version of the Church, despite its limited distribution, was seen by the Catholic Church as hugely potential for reaching its population, something that would be fully exploited by the Catholic Church with the opening of *Radio Vaticana* in 1931.

Notes

¹ A national campaign to increase the production of wheat.

² "...Con soddisfazione tutta Fascista, siamo in grado di asserire, dati alla mano, che l'anno trascorso 1930 e' stat oil migiore anno demografico del Regime: 298,755 nato contro I 149,831 del 1929". *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 12 February 1931.

³ Frank Rosengarten (1968). *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press*. Cleveleand: The Press of Case Western Reserve University. The comment by Churchill however, is originally quoted by Salvatorelli and Mira, *Storia dell' Italia nel periodo Fascista*, p.390.

⁴ The Fascist secret police.

⁵ The Special Tribunal, a court of law created solely to try anti-Fascists. Both entities were instituted by Mussolini and by the Minister of Justice Rocco.

⁶ For a full discussion of the suppression of anti-Fascist newspapers and the persecution of anti-Fascist Press personalities please see the following section.

⁷ The data was collected by the Italian historian Renzo De Felice. In Indro Montanelli and Mario Cervi (1998). *L'Italia del Novecento*". Milano: Rizzoli.

⁸ Although Mussolini's terror tactics were very effective in destroying the free Press, his regime could not control the clandestine papers emanating from Italy and from the nuclei of the resistance created by anti-Fascist journalist living abroad.

⁹ Despite Mussolini's intense efforts to control film, Italian moviemakers escaped strict control and produced satires and farces that sharply contrasted with the artificial façade presented by the Fascist party. However, after the creation of the Istituto Luce in 1924, a decree in 1926 made mandatory to show a Luce film before any commercial projections. The film industry never directly responded to the call for propaganda, producing a total of only thirty-four propaganda films between 1930 and 1943.

¹⁰ Piero Ottone (1996). *Storia del Giornalismo Italiano*. Milano: Longanesi & Co.

¹¹ Frank Rosengarten (1968). *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press*. Cleveland: The Press of Case Western University.

¹² Ibid, p.10.

¹³ For a full discussion of the more restrictive clauses of the Albertine Edict, please see chapter one.

¹⁴ Paolo Caretti (1994). *Diritto Pubblico dell'Informazione*. Bologna: Il Mulino, p.22.

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- ¹⁵ Frank Rosengarten (1968). *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press*. Cleveland: The Press of Case Western University, p. 12.
- ¹⁶ Loc. Cit.
- ¹⁷ Loc. Cit.
- ¹⁸ Ibid, p.13.
- ¹⁹ Loc. Cit.
- ²⁰ For an in-depth discussion of the Matteotti murder, please see chapter 2. The anti-Fascist, Socialist leader was murdered by Mussolini's men after making two accusatory speeches against the regime. His body was found abandoned in a car, after having been repeatedly stabbed.
- ²¹ Frank Rosengarten (1968). *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press*. Cleveland: The Press of Case Western University, p.14.
- ²² Loc. Cit.
- ²³ Loc. Cit.
- ²⁴ Loc. Cit.
- ²⁵ Loc. Cit.
- ²⁶ Ibid, p.15.
- ²⁷ Loc. Cit. Also, as listed in footnote 22, the thirteen National Confederations were: the National Confederation of Agricultural Land Owners, the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers, the National Confederation of Industrialists, the National Confederation of Industrial Workers, the National Confederation of Businessmen, the National Confederation of Business Workers, the National Confederation of Marine Air Transport Companies, the National Confederation of Workers in marine and Air Transport Industry, the National Confederation of Owners of Land and Internal Navigation Transport Companies, the National Confederation of Workers in Land and Internal Navigation Transport, the National Confederation of Bankers, the National Confederation of Bank Employees, and the National Confederation of Professional Men and Artists.
- ²⁸ Ibid, p.16.
- ²⁹ Ibid, p.27.
- ³⁰ Ibid, p. 17. These are really only a few of the examples of the violent tactics employed by Mussolini. Rosengarten reports of many more destructions and murders executed by the black shirts, such as the one of Giovanni Amendola, editor of *Il Mondo*, in Rome. The severe beatings he received for his political convictions eventually caused his death.
- ³¹ Ibid, p.55
- ³² Loc. Cit.
- ³³ Loc. Cit.
- ³⁴ Loc. Cit.
- ³⁵ Luigi and Alberto Albertini, co-editors of Italy's most prominent independent newspaper, *Il Corriere della Sera*, were forced to resign. Fascist Pietro Croci replaced them, although he only lasted four months on the job because Mussolini was not satisfied with his performance. The newspaper was put in complete alignment with the regime.
- ³⁶ Giovanni Ansaldo joined the Fascist Party and became editor of the Livorno-based newspaper *Il Telegrafo*, owned by the Fascist Ciano. In Piero Ottone (1996). *Storia del Giornalismo Italiano*. Milano: Longanesi & Co.
- ³⁷ Indro Montanelli and Mario Cervi (1998). *L'Italia del Novecento*". Milano: Rizzoli.
- ³⁸ For an explanation of IRI, please refer to chapter two.
- ³⁹ Giancarlo Vallauri was a businessman and a loyal member of the Fascist Party. In 1933 Mussolini entrusted him with the task of solving EAIR's financial difficulties. Despite many obstacles, Vallauri managed to expand transmission and increase the hours of broadcasting.
- ⁴⁰ For an in-depth discussion of Fascist radio propaganda, please see chapter five.
- ⁴¹ Paolo Caretti (1994). *Diritto Pubblico dell'Informazione*. Bologna: il Mulino.
- ⁴² The Undersecretaryship for Press and Propaganda, established with Royal Decree Nr. 1434, 6 September 1934.
- ⁴³ The Ministry of Press and Propaganda.
- ⁴⁴ Paolo Caretti (1994). *Diritto Pubblico dell'Informazione*. Bologna: il Mulino.
- ⁴⁵ Franco Monteleone (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio.
- ⁴⁶ Paolo Caretti (1994). *Diritto Pubblico dell'Informazione*. Bologna: il Mulino.

⁴⁷ Savatore Zingale, Leopoldo Gotti Porcinari (1976). *La Legge di Riforma della RAI*. Roma: Edizioni AIART.

⁴⁸ Franco Monteleone (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio.

⁴⁹ The Ministry of Popular Culture.

⁵⁰ An Inspectorate for Radio diffusion and Television.

⁵¹ Franco Monteleone (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio

⁵² Loc. Cit.

⁵³ Isola points out that until 1931 Italians owned more cars than radios because, comparatively, the cost of radios was so prohibitive. With the introduction on the market of cheaper receivers the situation changed a little: 242,000 radios compared to 188,000 cars. Both were certainly part of the status-symbol of the wealthier Italian class. Giovanni Isola (1996). *Abbassa la tua Radio per favore*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia, p.5.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.7.

⁵⁵ The Pioneers, ibid, p.11.

⁵⁶ Loc. Cit.

⁵⁷ "Gent.mo Signore, osservando attentamente l'accluso opuscolo dovra' convincersi della colossale ed importante attivita' che va esplicando l'EIAR attraverso la Radio mezzo prodigioso del secolo nostro, tenendoci minuziosamente e sollecitamente informati di quanto si svolge quotidianamente nella vita nazionale, che puo' essere utile e piacevole a ogni categoria di persone, per le molteplici e variate comunicazioni culturali, commerciali, sportive, ecc. Oltre alle innumerevoli cerimonie, che piacciono ed appassionano, alle quali, come dimostra il succitato opuscolo, prendono viva parte le piu' spiccate personalita' della nostra Italia. Perche' dunque privarsi di questo mezzo indispensabile, fedele compagno ai grandi e ai piccoli? Non esiti, dunque! Acquisti una radio e avra' il piacere, come altri, di partecipare alle manifestazioni che si succedono in buona parte del mondo. Considerandola gia' della famiglia dell'EIAR, cordialmente la saluto". Loc. Cit.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.12.

⁵⁹ A full discussion of religious/Fascist propaganda on EIAR can be found in the following section of chapter three, entitled *Programming Development in Radio*.

⁶⁰ "La Unione Radiofonica Italiana, iniziando ufficialmente le trasmissioni della Stazione di Milano, spera che sia in questo momento in ascolto L'On. Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri: a Benito Mussolini la URI e tutti I presenti rivolgono un deferente saluto, saluto fatto di fratitudine e di ammirazione, a lui, che vuole gli Italiani colti d mente, sani di cuore e lieti di spirito, a lui, che vuole un'Italia forte e temuta, a lui, speranza e fortuna della patria nostra". Enrico Marchesi, *La Stazione Radio Trasmittente di Milano Solennemente Inaugurata* (1925). In G. Isola (1998). *L'ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo*. Milano: Edizioni Bruno Mondadori, p.312.

⁶¹ *Il Popolo d'Italia* and *La Stampa* among others.

⁶² "Per evitare al povero radioutente la sopresa di chi 'alla fine dell'anno, fra l'acquisto dell'apparecchio, riparazioni, tasse, ecc. si accorge che con quello che ha speso poteva benissimo costruirsi una villetta al mare". Mauro Janni, *La Rubrica della Radio. La radiofonia in Italia, Il Popolo D'Italia*, 10 January, 1937. In Giovanni Isola (1996). *Abbassa la tua Radio per favore*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia, p 33.

⁶³ This last group obtained a full exemption in 1938. Loc. Cit.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.37.

⁶⁵ Frank Rosengarten (1968). *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press*. Cleveland: The Press of Western Reserve University, p.23.

⁶⁶ Luigi Albertini was later forced to resign from his position.

⁶⁷ The speech was given on 27 November, 1922. Loc. Cit.

⁶⁸ "Ma, capiamoci bene, che cos'e' questo liberalismo, questa pratica di liberalismo? Perche' se c'e' qualcuno che dice che per essere un liberale perfetto bisogna dare la liberta' a qualche centinaio di stupidi manigoldi, la liberta' di rovinare quaranta milioni di Italiani, allora io rifiuto energicamente di dare questa liberta'signori, io non ho fetizie, e quando gli interessi della nazione sono in pericolo, non ho neanche la fetizia della liberta'. Ecco perche', dopo che alcuni mi hanno parlato della liberta' di stampa io, che sono un giornalista, ho ditto che la liberta' non e' solo un diritto ma anche un dovere". Loc. Cit.

⁶⁹ "Lo stato Fascista non solo si difende, ma attacca. E coloro che intendono difamare lo stato Fascista all'estero o pensano di degradarlo qui in Italia, devono realizzare che affrontano conseguenze molto gravi e imprevedibili". Ibid, p.24.

⁷⁰ “Il giornalismo e’ un opera nobile quando non serve interessi clandestini ma quando e’ un’arma in difesa di un ideale...il giornalismo e’ una missione, un apostolato, il cui fine e’ la collaborazione con la nazione nella creazione della stato Fascista”. Loc. Cit.

⁷¹ *Webster’s New International Dictionary*. In Frank Rosengarten (1968). *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press*. Cleveland: The Press of Western Reserve University, p.25.

⁷² “In un regime totalitario, come deve essere qualsiasi regime nato da una rivoluzione trionfante, la stampa e’ un elemento di questo regime; in un regime unitario, la stampa non puo’ rimanere all’esterno di questa unita’. Ecco perche’ tutta la stampa Italiana e’ Fascista e deve lottare in maniera compatta sotto la banda del littorio...secondi solatanto alle scuole, i giornali sono l’arma ideologica piu’ potente di una societa’ perche’ circolano costantemente in mezzo alle masse ed esegiono la loro funzione, quella di dare informazione e di modellare il carattere”. Loc. Cit.

⁷³ Ibid, p.26.

⁷⁴ “I giornali Fascisti stavano adempiedo i veri obietive del giornalismo moderno, ossia la discussione di problemi seri e l’istruzione e l’educazione del pubblico...I giornali Fascisti avevano l’obbligo di diventare la fonte dei principi morali e politici, il veicolo piu’ rapido pre raggiungere la mentalita’ della popolazione, l’organismo piu’ adatto per stimolare, modellare e educare lo spirito dei cittadini”. Ibid, p.27.

⁷⁵ “Il Duce ci ha insegnato l’arte del parlare chiaramente, senza frivolosita’ e senza paure. I prefetti e i capi locali dei fasci sono uomini fallibili ai quali non si dovrebbe dare il potere di vita o morte sui giornalisti. C’e’ solo un uomo infallibile in Italia: il Duce, che dice sempre la verita’. C’e’ un solo uomo non rimpiazzabile in Italia: il Duce che ha sempre ragione. Tutti gli altri fanno errori e possono essere rimpiazzati”. Stanis Ruinas (1932). *Appunti sul Problema della Stampa Fascista*. Roma. In Frank Rosengarten (1968). *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press*. Cleveland: The Press of Western Reserve University, p. 29.

⁷⁶ Loc. Cit.. This system of sending news directives had been started by Mussolini shortly after the March on Rome.

⁷⁷ Loc. Cit.

⁷⁸ Loc. Cit.

⁷⁹ “Non parlate delle nostre sconfitte in Etiopia; date molto spazio alle notizie provenienti dall’Egitto del movimento anti-britannico senza, comunque, dar l’impressione che noi siamo contenti di questo; non pubblicate notizie dei nostri bombardamenti nell’Africa dell’Est”. Ibid, p.30.

⁸⁰ “Completa solidarieta’ con la Germania per la questione della Danzica”. Loc. Cit.

⁸¹ Comments on daily events.

⁸² The daily Fascist news program

⁸³ G. Isola (1998). *L’ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo*. Milano: Edizioni Bruno Mondadori.

⁸⁴ *Pietro Mascagni alla Stazione IRO* (1926). In G. Isola (1998). *L’ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo*. Milano: Edizioni Bruno Mondadori, p. 6.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 8.

⁸⁶ “Quindici anni sono trascorsi, ma nelle vostre anime di devoti soldati della patria il tempo non ha affievolito l’ardore...sotto la illuminata guida del Re e la sapiente condotta del Duce (l’Italia) ascende verso i radiosi destini che sicuramente l’attendono”. Emanuele Filiberto di Savoia, *Fiammate* (1926). In G. Isola (1998). *L’ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo*. Milano: Edizioni Bruno Mondadori, p.16.

⁸⁷ G. Isola (1998). *L’ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo*. Milano: Edizioni Bruno Mondadori.

⁸⁸ Some of the most famous names among these men were Innocenzo Cappa, Carlo Alberto Blanche, and Enzo Ferrieri, Artistic Director of Radio Milano.

⁸⁹ 1927. In G. Isola (1998). *L’ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo*. Milano: Edizioni Bruno Mondadori, p. 164.

⁹⁰ “Oggi nel quinto anniversario della Marcia su Roma, prima di tutto ricordiamo con devota venerazione tutte le Camicie Nere, morte per la causa della rivoluzione Fascista...ora il Regime Fascista ha vinto tutte le battaglie su tutte le linee...ora gli stranieri vengono in Italia non solo per vedere i ruderi dell’antica potenza e le bellezze naturali della nostra terra, ma vengono ad ammirare il formidabile lavoro compiuto in questi cinque anni dal Regime Fascista...Noi amiamo il nostro Duce al di sopra di tutto! Come si ama Iddio. Come si ama la patria”. Nicolino Vinci, *Echi dell’Anniversario della Marcia su Roma a IRO*

(1927)". In G. Isola (1998). *L'ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo*. Milano: Edizioni Bruno Mondadori, p.169.

⁹¹ *L'Osservatore Romano*, 22 August 1927. In Giovanni Isola (1996). *Abbassa la tua Radio per favore*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia, p144.

⁹² "Senonche' ai nostril tempi si fa necessaria una piu' estesa ed accurata vigilanza, in quanto tanto piu' numerose sono diventate le occasioni di naufragio morale e religioso per la gioventu' inseperta, segnatamente a causa di libri empi e licanziosi, molti dei quali diabolicamente diffuse a basso prezzo, degli spettacoli cinematografici, ed ora anche delle trasmissioni radiofoniche, le qualimoltiplicano e facilitano, per cosi' dire, ongi sorta di lettura, come il cinematografo ogni sorta di spettacoli. Questi potentissimi mezzi di divulgazione, che possono riuscire, se ben governati, di grande utilita' all'istruzione ed educazione, vengono spesso subordinati all'incentivo di male passioni e all'avidita' di guadagno". *Divini Illius Magistri*, 12 December 1929, par.90. In Giovanni Isola (1996). *Abbassa la tua Radio per favore*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia, p. 145.

⁹³ 30 December 1930.

⁹⁴ "E' un fatto, in verita', che non piu' di nascosto e nelle tenebre, ma apertamente, messo dap arte ogni senso di pudore, cosi' a parole come in scritto, con rappresentazioni teatrali d'ogni specie, con romanzi, con novella e racconti ameni, con film, con trasmissioni radiofoniche, infine, con tutti I ritrovati piu' recenti della scienza, e' conculcata e messa in derisione la santita' del matrimonio, e invece o si lodano I divorzi, gli adulteri e I vizi piu' turpi, o, se non altro, si dipingono con tali colori che sembra si vogliano far comparire scevri d'ogni macchi ed infamia". *Casti Connubii*, 30 December 1930, par. 45.

⁹⁵ *The "Average Housewife" in Post-World War II Italy* L. Tasca, *Journal of Women's History* (Johns Hopkins), Summer 2004, Vol. 16 Issue 2, p92-115, 24p.

⁹⁶ P. Meldini (1975). *Sposa e Madre Esempiare. Ideologia e Politica della Donna e della Famiglia Durante if Fascismo*. Firenze: Guarraldi Editore, p. 73.

⁹⁷ "[Quando gli uomini scrivono] lo fanno con uno scopo molto preciso. Hanno da chiedermi un titolo di un libro, una serissima informazione, un consiglio letterario...Se [le donne] hanno da dirvi una cosa sgradevole, si firmano con nome e cognome, con quel gusto di dar battaglia tipico delle 'femministe' di vent'anni fa, o delle dame molto brutte, che sono appunto quelle che dicono le cose sgradevoli". Enzo Ferrieri, *Discorso alle Ascoltatrici*. In G. Isola (1998). *L'ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo*. Milano: Edizioni Bruno Mondadori,p.214.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p278.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p.147.

⁹⁹ "Ho quasi 80 anni, per andare all Chiesa ho un pezzo di strada da fare, battuto da automobili che mi fanno paura. Vado in chiesa di rado. Ma ogni domenica vado davanti all'altoparlante della nostra Radio e ascolto la sua parola cosi' chiara, cosi' calda di desiderio di bene che mi scende al cuore". Padre Vittorio Facchinetti, *La radio e l'Apostolato Religioso*, p.93. Loc. Cit.

¹⁰⁰ "Per il moment, lo ripeto, per soddisfare l'obbligo della S. Messa bisogna personalmente assistervi; tanto e' vero che recentissimamente la Santa Sede ha proibito la trasmissione per radio della music ache accompagnava in chiesa la messa solenne". Ibid, p.87.

¹⁰¹ "Non devo dimenticare la nostra donna di servizio, che mi chiede sempre il favore di lasciarle sentire la spiegazione del Vangelo ogni domenica. E' un'ascoltatrice molto attenta e devota". Ibid, p. 151.

¹⁰² Io sono una povera cameriera che ha la fortuna di ascoltare quasi tutte le domoniche la sua buona parola. Sbrigo presto i miei lavori e intanto che la signora e' a Messa grande, io ascolto con gioia la sua parola. Ibid, p.151.

¹⁰³ Ibid, p.153.

¹⁰⁴ His radio broadcasts were collected by him in a fascinating book that is, regrettably, out of print. A selection of his broadcasts was republished in G. Isola (1998). *L'ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo*. Milano: Edizioni Bruno Mondadori.

¹⁰⁵ Vittorio Facchinetti (1931). *I Vangeli domenicali attraverso la radio*. Brescia: Queriniana. Ibid, p.159.

¹⁰⁶ "Quali sono I nostril doveri verso le Autorita' civili che ci governano in nome di Dio, perche' ogni poetere deriva da Lui? Essi si riducono a tre, certo a voi gia' noti, ma che e' bene qui richiamare: il rispetto, l'oobediencia, il tribute. Il rispetto, poiche' appunto, se l'autorita' viene da Dio, coloro che ne sono investiti, il Re, I suoi Mnistri, il Capo del governo, sono degni della nostra venerazione, e vorrei dire del nostro affetto. Riconosciamo con gaudiosa esultanza, o amici, che l'adempimento di un simile dovere oggi per noi, in Italia, non e' un sacrificio, ma una gioia, non e' un peso, ma un onore, non e' un dovere, ma un

bisogno; poiche' questo re si chiama Vittorio Emanuele III, il continuatore glorioso delle eroiche civili e religiose tradizioni della Casa di Savoia; e questo Capo del governo si chiama Benito Mussolini, l'uomo della Provvidenza che ha salvato la Patria, ne ha valorizzato i piu' sublimi ideali, ha collaborato magnificamente, col Papa della Conciliazione, a dare Dio all'Italia e l'Italia a Dio. L'obbedienza, conseguenza del rispetto e della venerazione, base dell'ordine sociale, fondamento della pace individuale e della sicurezza nazionale, antidote potente contro l'anarchia e il bolscevismo. Il tributo: tributo di preghiera, perche' il cielo assista, illumine, protegga, difenda le politiche, civili, militari autorita', da cui dipende il benessere dei popoli, la tranquillita' e la grandezza della Patria; e tributo di denaro, elemento necessario per il funzionamento dello Stato. Bisogna dunque pagare le imposte, o le tasse, come le chiamiamo noi, compreso, tra parentesi, l'abbonamento al Radio". Loc. Cit.

¹⁰⁷ "Essa non interviene, se non perche' sollecitata, nelle faccende politiche; e una volta che si e' assicurata una dignitosa indipendenza, non reclama piu', non protesta piu'; se ne sta contenta, serena e tranquilla sulla roccia infrangibile su cui s'innalza la citta' della luce e la citta' della pace, ed ha la sua sede inviolabile il piu' vasto impreo delle anime. La prova, o Italiani che mi ascoltate, o cattolici del mondo intero, l'avete sotto lo sguardo, dal giorno della Conciliazione e della firma del Concordato". Ibid, p. 159-160.

¹⁰⁸ For a review of this information, please refer back to chapter two.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p.162.

¹¹⁰ "Bisogna amare la Patria per gli immensi benefici che essa ci arreca in tempo di pace...l'Italia e' una mamma per ognuno di noi. Ci protegge...con il suo meraviglioso esercito che rappresenta uno dei migliori attributi di un popolo, austero ed armonioso di disciplina...la forza e la potenza di tutta una nazione". Ibid, p.163.

¹¹¹ "Nessuno ingora le ragioni impellenti, o i gravi motivi di sicurezza e di difesa, di espansione e di colonizzazione che decisero il governo a occupare l'Etiopia; ma sappiamo pure come chi dirige con tanta saggezza la nostra politica abbia tentato tutte le vie per risolvere diplomaticamente l'inevitabile conflitto e conseguire pacificamente i desiderati e decretati obiettivi...la nostra impresa coloniale, necessaria per dar terra, pane e lavoro ai prolifici abitanti di un glorioso paese e per aiutare, al contempo, l'evoluzione progressive di un popolo semibarbaro...". Ibid, p.164.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BEGINNINGS OF RADIO VATICANA, 1929-1938.

“Listen, oh heavens, to what I am about to say, listen, oh earth, to the words coming from my mouth, listen all of you who are united by a similar intent, rich or poor, hear and listen oh faraway people...”

Pope Pius XII

By the end of the 1920's the Catholic Church had made considerable strides to reassert its political, moral, and ethical position in Italy, a position that had been seriously weakened and threatened at the unification as well as during and after the end of the First World War. By 1929 the Vatican was an independent state, officially recognized and protected for the most part by the Fascist government. Mussolini was firmly in power as the Prime Minister; although Italy was still nominally a constitutional monarchy under the House of Savoy, the dictator had secured the totalitarian state in a single party system. In 1929, Pope Pius XI left the Vatican for the first time since 1870, officially ending the state of besiegement of the Church.

Pius XI's objective was now to expand the power and influence of the Catholic Church with other countries, an objective that would be continued by Pope Pius XII. Diplomatic relations and the Catholic Press would be instrumental for the achievement of this goal, but the Vatican had also become fully aware that only radio could reach the largely illiterate masses in ways that had been unimaginable until now. Before the advent of broadcasting, the pulpit had been the means through which the Roman Catholic Church had educated the masses; radio became efficiently an extension of the pulpit for verbal communication. While Catholic personalities continued to be a significant part of the Fascist radio experience, the Church intended to consolidate its own control over wireless communication. Given the close relation between Marchese Marconi and the

Vatican as well as the financial support from the Fascist state that was agreed upon during the Lateran Treaty, the setting was ready for the creation of the official Catholic station, *Radio Vaticana*.

The Catholic Church in the global context

The Roman Catholic message that would be sent over the airwaves would meet a world in transition. While Democracy was rapidly gaining ground in the Western world, the East was moving steadily toward Communism: the creation of the Third International was run by Moscow and effectively became the propaganda wing of world Communism. Stalin had successfully eliminated his opposition from the right. While Bucharin, Tomskij and Rykov, accused of separatism were forced to resign, Trotsky was expelled from the country. These events marked the beginning of Stalin's dictatorship in Russia.

Inspired by events in Russia a few countries experienced Communist uprisings that put serious fear in conservative European minds: Hungarian revolutionary Bela Kun formed a dictatorship of the proletariat before the allies forced him to evacuate to Slovakia; similarly, in Germany a Communist uprising began in the Ruhr region when 50,000 people formed a "Red Army" and took over the area; although the revolt was tamed, similar protests occurred and were defeated in Saxony and Hamburg. One of the strongest points of alliance between the Roman Catholic Church and the Fascist state had been the fight against Communism, perceived by both as a serious and immediate threat that was becoming increasingly more real; in Italy there was already a Communist party that was controlled by the Third International, and Radio Moscow had started short-wave broadcasts to Italy. The Catholic Church hated Socialism as much as Communism, the main reason why it supported Franco's rise to power in Spain. The Vatican wanted to be

an active player in the Western world, attacking atheist Communism and propagating its doctrine of faith to religious followers everywhere in Europe, the United States, Africa, and Latin America.

The Vatican State was born on 11 February 1929, in the midst of this climate of change. *Radio Vaticana* was created late compared to other European radio stations. The reason rests specifically in the birth of the Vatican City through the Lateran Treaty. Curiously, it appears that the agreement was negotiated and reached under a great degree of secrecy. *Radio Vaticana* journalist and biographer Bea points out that the news of the imminent signing was published only by a small number of foreign newspapers a few days before the actual event. On 7 February 1929 Cardinal Gasparri invited the diplomatic corps representatives to the Holy See and informed them rather abruptly of the agreement with the Fascist government. One ambassador asked, 'How are we to interpret this communiqué from Your Eminence?' Cardinal Gasparri simply answered 'Interpret it any way you want it. I have nothing more to say'.¹ On the actual day of the signing, Mussolini ensured that the event would be recorded and used later as another tool of propaganda:

The *Luce* [newsreel] Institute documented the event with full coverage. This was very daring for the times; cinema had never before crossed the heavy doors of the Catholic hierarchies. And it seemed even more difficult that its first filming experiment would happen around such a delicate event, an event that was realized under an extremely austere climate...²

After the signing, Pope Pius XI explained to a group of priests and seminarians:

A Treaty which is intended to recognize....and assure a real territorial sovereignty....a Concordat which we wanted tied to the Treaty since its very first inception, to regulate properly the religious conditions in Italy...negative

comments will certainly come; but they will be easily divided into two categories: some will say that we asked for too much; others will say that we asked for too little. Perhaps some others will find the territory too small. We can say now, without going in too much detail, that the land is very small, the smallest we decided to ask for, after much meditation, prayer and reflection...but when such a small territory can boast to have Bernini's colonnade, Michelangelo's dome, the treasures of science and art contained in the Vatican archives, in the galleries and the museums, when a territory is the custodian of the Tomb of the Prince of the Apostles, then we have the right to affirm that there is not in the world a bigger or more precious territory.³

That evening, *L'Osservatore Romano* printed a special edition. It was 12 February 1929, the first time since 1870 that the Catholic newspaper did not print the Latin phrase "Non Praevalebunt" ("They will not prevail") as its heading. Rather, it printed the following communiqué:

Today at noon, in the Popes' Hall of the Apostolic Lateran Palazzo a Treaty was signed between the Holy See and Italy, with which the Roman Question is solved, and also a Concordat to regulate the religious conditions of the Church in Italy. Those leading the event were: for Italy, the Head of Government Benito Mussolini and for the Holy See the Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, Secretary of State. They were respectively assisted by the Honourable Alfredo Rocco, the Honourable Dino Gransci, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs and by Monsignor Francesco Borgoncini Duca, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Monsignor Giuseppe Pizzardo, Assistant to the State Secretary and by Professor Francesco Pacelli⁴, consultant to the Holy See.⁵

Article 2 of the Concordat and article 6 of the Treaty dealt directly with the issue of communication and opened, as Professor Monticone points out, 'a new epoch in the communication exchanges between the centre and the periphery of Christianity.'⁶ Article 2 read:

The Holy See will communicate and correspond freely with bishops, priests and the entire Catholic world with no intervention by the Italian government.⁷

Article 6 of the treaty expanded this concept further by giving the specific details of the responsibilities of the Italian state toward the Vatican:

- a) The Italian Government will, at its own expense, secure the connection of Vatican City with the San Paolo radio electric station and, in the near future, with the new stations of S. Palomba and Cecchignoletta;
- b) Vatican City will build in its territory an autonomous radiotelegraphic and radiotelephonic station;
- c) Vatican City and the Italian Government will follow all the international norms that regulate radiotelegraphic and radiotelephonic services and will work toward implementing all the rules necessary to avoid any disturbances in the operation of all neighbouring stations;
- c) Such a station will be built and financed exclusively by the Vatican state, minus the sum of L.500.000,⁸ which will be paid to Vatican City no later than 31 December 1931⁹.

Although the norms and regulations for the creation of *Radio Vaticana* had been put in place, the reality of creating an autonomous station was not without obstacles. On 26 February 1929 Cardinal Secretary of State Pacelli¹⁰ met with the Minister of Communication Ciano and the General Director of that ministry. Both Italian officials expressed concern over the technical difficulties that would doubtlessly occur during the construction of an independent Catholic radio station. They suggested, instead, that *Radio Vaticana* be serviced by the Italian radio network. For reasons that seem apparent, Cardinal Pacelli was not satisfied with this solution and quickly informed Pope Pius XI of the urgent need to obtain help in this matter. The only logical person to turn to was, of course, Marchese Marconi.¹¹ Pope Pius XI thought the Italian scientist would be the perfect figure to carry his voice to the world and create an independent station for the

Vatican. Interestingly, both figures demonstrated a convergence of interests regarding their two main objectives: to create a technically superior station to highlight the importance of the Christian Gospel message, and to mobilize *Radio Vaticana* into the ongoing discourse regarding the marriage between religion and science. As Professor Monticone points out, this last objective set apart the Catholic radio station from other Italian national stations and delineated much of its early programming, which were primarily religious broadcasts or serious discussions surrounding science.¹² Carlo Confalonieri, special secretary to Pope Pius XI wrote:

Pius XI tackled the creation of Radio Vaticana with his usual determination and Marchese Marconi put himself at the Pope's services with admirable devotion. Following a meeting with Pope Pius XI....on 11 June, 1929, only four days away from the exchange of the sanctions of the Lateran Accords....I accompanied the great inventor to the Vatican gardens for the first look at the construction site. Marchese Marconi's modesty was remarkable and inspiring. It is indeed true that genius does not need phoniness; it is the little men who pose and boast. A few minutes later Cardinal Pacelli arrived, one of the main collaborators of the Accords...Construction began soon thereafter and was done quickly and efficiently.¹³

It is significant to note that the building of *Radio Vaticana* happened so close to the exchange of the Lateran Accord sanctions. Independent communication over the airwaves was a top priority for the Vatican and needed to be implemented immediately, probably to ensure that the Fascist government stay true to the clauses of the agreement.

Marcantonio Pacelli,¹⁴ son of the late Francesco Pacelli,¹⁵ wrote an article recapping the events that surrounded Marchese Marconi's involvement with the construction and opening of *Radio Vaticana*. The piece is based on his retelling of his father's recollections and should be treated accordingly; nevertheless, it offers interesting

details and difficult to access primary sources¹⁶ about that collaboration. On 27 February 1929 Marchese Marconi met with Cardinal Pacelli, assured him of his cooperation and offered to install his latest discovery, a short-wave radio that would certainly meet the desires of Pope Pius XI to have an autonomous station inside the Vatican.¹⁷ On 15 June 1929, following the signing of the Lateran Treaty, Marchese Marconi wrote the following letter to Francesco Pacelli¹⁸:

Illustrious Marchese,

In thanking you for the letter of 14 June, I want to express my feelings of profound and devoted gratitude for the high honour that His Holiness has deigned to give me in conferring to me the delicate but flattering responsibility of providing the radiotelegraphic and radiotelephonic station for Vatican City.

It is my firm intent to reply to the trust given me by the Holy Father by putting all my efforts in ensuring that the station will be well-received by His Holiness and fully in line with the most recent scientific and technical discoveries.¹⁹

The following paragraph showed Marchese Marconi's commitment to ensuring the full application of the Lateran Treaty and Concordat²⁰. In fact, he quoted almost verbatim from article 6 of the Treaty:

Please reassure the Holy Father that the station will in every way be in line with international norms and agreements that regulate radiotelegraphic services in order to avoid any disturbances in the operation of all neighbouring stations.²¹

Marchese Marconi then went on to state that he would do his best to find financing for the overall cost of the project in such a way that would be minimally taxing on the Vatican itself:

The project that I have the honour to show you...gives a clear idea of the station and also includes the minimum relative costs for such project.

I find it superfluous to assure the Holy See that I took great care in presenting the lowest possible estimate.

I would also like to inform you that, although the overall estimate does not include the costs relative to the receiving equipment since Vatican Radio has been designed solely for transmission, I have nevertheless included such equipment at no additional cost...²²

During the first phase of the project, Marchese Marconi instituted an international committee to help fund the “radio of the Pope”. An interesting point is that, at some point in this early stage and as a result of various rumours in an article published by a Belgian newspaper Marchese Marconi feared that the Vatican may have already established an independent committee with the same objective. If true, this would have made useless the international committee organized by the Italian scientist. Marchese Marconi wrote a letter to the Vatican asking for clarification. Cardinal Pacelli responded:

I received yesterday your letter and I spoke with the Holy Father who asked me to reply to you that:

The station will only be used to transmit radiotelegraphic and radiotelephonic messages and not also music and singing;

No committee has been created by the Vatican in Rome for the building of the radio station;

Recently, a large American company that had offered to build the station was informed by the Vatican that the project was offered exclusively to Marchese Marconi by the Holy Father;

Marchese Marconi has complete freedom to take any initiative he may deem appropriate for the creation of other committees or anything else.²³

It would be interesting to know with certainty the reasons behind the article published in the Belgian newspaper. Perhaps it was simply a matter of speculation surrounding an event of paramount historical significance for Catholics everywhere. There were no apparent links between the Vatican State and Belgium other than the collaboration of Belgian engineer J. Baptise Mathieu to the opening of the radio station.

The construction of *Radio Vaticana* continued throughout 1929. On 5 February 1930, Marchese Marconi wrote once again to Cardinal Pacelli:

Illustrious Marchese²⁴,

Considering the task of assigning wavelengths to the radio station of the Vatican, I would propose that the Secretary of State write to the *Bureau International de l'Union Telegraphique* of Berna to inform them that Vatican City would like to request the following wavelengths for its station:

5968 Kc = 50, 02 meters

15120 Kc. =19, 20 meters²⁵

The request was granted and in October of the same year *Radio Vaticana* was launched.

Father Gianfranceschi S.J., First Director of Radio Vaticana

Pope Pius XI chose the Society of Jesus to run *Radio Vaticana*, a religious order which was founded in 1540 by Saint Ignatius Loyola. As the Catholic Encyclopedia reports: "The title was Latinized into 'Societas de Jesu' in the Bull of Paul III approving its formation and the first formula of its Institute". Interestingly the term Jesuit, meaning one who uses too frequently and inappropriately the name of Jesus was applied to the order negatively in 1544 and only with time did it become accepted, although it was never used by its founder. Jesuits were known primarily as educators, scholars, missionaries; over the years the order had become the spearhead of Catholicism. As such, it was recognized as the intelligentsia of the Catholic Church, containing the greatest scholars and scientists of the time and making it a logical choice for the running of *Radio Vaticana*. The Jesuits had already founded in 1850 *La Civiltà Cattolica* under the guidance of its creator, Matteo Liberatore S.J.²⁶ The periodical's main goal was to defend the Catholic Church and the Pope. It was also created to spread the word of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Doubtlessly, no other order was better equipped to propagate the voice

of the Pope as well as present the Church as a sophisticated and scientifically progressive entity, something very dear to Pope Pius XI in light of his desire to establish closer diplomatic relations with the international community. Among the many potential candidates for the position of *Radio Vaticana's* first director, the most obvious and intelligent choice was Father Giuseppe Gianfranceschi. Elected in 1925 as President of the Pontifical Academy of Science,²⁷ he had demonstrated that he understood fully the objectives outlined by the Pope concerning *Radio Vaticana*. In a letter sent to the engineer Luigi Respighi, Director of the Communications Office for the Vatican, Father Gianfranceschi wrote:

I have thought about the project for the transmitting station. I believe that to make it useful to scientists and to justify it to the *Specola* [Observatory] we could organize a Scientific Radio Bulletin of the *Specola*...every fifteen days at the same time, for five minutes it could transmit to the world the most important and most recent news of astronomy and physics that could be collected by the *Specola* and the Academy prior to the broadcast. A Committee for editing could be formed, the message would be written in Latin to render its comprehension universal and to establish Latin as the international scientific language. It seems to be a brilliant initiative. If you have the chance, please speak of it [with the Pope].²⁸

The letter was sent four years before the Lateran Accords and six years before the nomination of Father Gianfranceschi as first director of *Radio Vaticana*. It should come as no surprise then that Pope Pius XI entrusted the Jesuit scientist to this extremely crucial task. On 21 September 1930, the Holy Father sent this letter to Fr. Gianfranceschi:

My dear Son,

The time is near when everything will be ready so that Vatican City may have its own functioning Radio Station, which has been under the direct supervision of Our dear Son Marchese Marconi.

We therefore thought it opportune to choose someone full of Our trust, who could function as director of such an important and delicate task with care and competence, and Our choice fell on You, Our dearest son, whose virtues and talents are well-known and perfectly suited to this task.

Therefore with this letter We nominate you Director of the Radio Station of the Vatican City and we are sure that under your direction the mission and objectives that inspired it will certainly be fulfilled.

As a renewed sign of Our paternal benevolence and with best wishes, we give you the Apostolic Blessing.²⁹

Some scholars³⁰ think that Marchese Marconi himself may have suggested Father Gianfranceschi to Pope Pius XI; others believe the nomination could have come from the Victor General of the Society of Jesus, Father Vladimir Ledochowski, S.J. Historian Bea advanced the theory that, aside from the obvious professional achievements that surrounded the Jesuit scientist, it was his close personal friendship with the Holy Father that secured his nomination. The following speech given by Agostino Gemelli in 1936, when the body of Father Gianfranceschi was moved from Rome to his hometown of Acervia, seems to lend some validity to Bea's theory:

The first person who admired him [Gianfranceschi] was the Vicar of Christ himself, Pius XI, who showed him his trust continuously and who loved to see him during the tranquil hours of his day, meeting him in the library. He was so close to the heart of the Pope that all of us witnessed the Holy Father be moved to tears when his friend was remembered at a meeting of the Academy. No other price could have been more important to Father Gianfranceschi, man of religion and science, than to be close to the heart of the Vicar of Christ.³¹

Regardless of the main reasons behind the nomination, Father Gianfranceschi was a brilliant man who had achieved distinction in his field from a very young age. He was born on 21 February 1875. After finishing high school he moved to Rome to study engineering at the *Sapienza* University.³² During his fourth year of studies, he was introduced to the theology of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and decided to enter the order, breaking off his engagement to a girl from his hometown. He became officially a member of the Society of Jesus on 12 November 1896. In the following years, he obtained degrees in philosophy, mathematics, physics, and later in 1909, theology.³³

Father Gianfranceschi had become famous throughout Europe for his many writings on various scientific subjects ranging from the theory of relativity to the minimum duration of sound. In 1924 he participated to the Conference for Scientific Studies in Toronto and the Fifth International Conference of Mathematicians in Cambridge.³⁴ Agostino Gemelli also said of him:

I remember how people listened to him in the international circles he always frequented. His word was important...I saw many times famous men of science, such as the Marchese Marconi himself, surround the Jesuit to hear his thoughts and his findings.³⁵

In 1921 Pope Benedict XV nominated him President of the The Pontifical Academy of the New Lynxes,³⁶ a position that was confirmed a year later by Pope Pius XI. One of his most incredible achievements, however, was in 1928 when, with the Pope's blessings,³⁷ he joined an Italian expedition led by aeronautical engineer and Arctic explorer Umberto Nobile³⁸ to the North Pole and returned to Rome with amazing stories of his travels. Finally in 1929, he began the collaboration with Marchese Marconi that led to the opening of *Radio Vaticana*.³⁹ These details may seem superfluous but they are

actually of paramount importance to paint the picture of a man who truly catapulted the Catholic Church and the voice of the Pope into the world. His international fame and prestige served as an added element of credibility to the Vatican. Significantly but not unusually, the Catholic State demonstrated foresight and intelligence by surrounding itself with the crème of the scientific world, namely Marchese Marconi and Father Gianfranceschi, an attitude that was in direct contrast with Italy's in the early 1920's where Guglielmo Marconi's patent was rejected. It was only then that he left Italy for the United Kingdom, where he established his first company, British Marconi.

The preparations for the opening of Radio Vaticana

As the inauguration day drew closer, *L'Osservatore Romano* carefully documented the progress:

Every effort has been made to ensure that the radio building and the towers will be aesthetically harmonious with the rest of the landscape. The energy from the transmitting building...is conveyed to the two aerials by two separate concentric copper tube feeders similar to those used in the British Imperial beam stations. The transmitting building itself is situated in a part of the grounds in the Vatican that is surrounded by a Roman wall forty five feet high, and the masts are placed outside this wall. In order not to destroy the beauty of the Vatican gardens, a tunnel forty three meters long, passing under the Roman wall, has been constructed to accommodate the aerial feeders.⁴⁰

The cable tunnels started at the radio building and went underground, conveying from the transmission equipment with a potency of 15 Kw. It was a short wave receiver, programmed to transmit on two wavelengths, m. 19, 84 and m.50, 26.⁴¹ *L'Osservatore Romano* boasted the technical efficiency of the newly built *Radio Vaticana*, expressing that it exhibited the most avant-garde features, allowing it to connect with the rest of the world:

The Radio Station of the Vatican is among the first stations in Europe from which it is possible to speak telephonically in 'duplex' with other European, American, Canadian, and Australian stations. It (RV) can be considered the most advanced short wave station due to the support and genius of the Marchese Marconi and his able assistants; *Radio Vaticana* will not only represent for Vatican City a direct radiotelegraphic and radiotelephonic connection with the most distant regions of the world, but also it will allow the voice of His Holiness to be radio diffused and listened to all over the world.⁴²

On 11 February 1931, the day before *Radio Vaticana*'s official opening, *L'Osservatore Romano* reported that the media had been invited to attend a special pre-opening event:

Today, in the meanwhile, an extremely large number of Italian and foreign journalists went to visit the new Radio Station. They were warmly greeted by Senator Marchese Marconi and by the Director of the Station, Fr. Gianfranceschi. The Engineer Esposito, Senator Marchese Marconi's executive, explained all the details relative to the magnificent new Station to the representatives of the major news agencies and media organizations. Marchese Solari was also present...Once the tour was finished, Senator Marchese Marconi and Fr. Gianfranceschi chatted amiably and at length with the journalists who had many questions...the wait for the inaugural words that will be spoken by the Holy Father tomorrow is intense worldwide. Messages have arrived to Fr. Gianfranceschi from various European countries and America, messages that exalt the power of the new Station...-we are waiting for the moment-says one of these letters-when we will be able to genuflect in our own home and hear the beloved word of our Father, the Pope.⁴³

The signing of the Lateran Accords in 1929 followed by the opening of *Radio Vaticana* in 1931 represented glorious moments in the history of the Catholic Church, the crowning moment of all the efforts begun by Benedict XV after the end of the First World War. Catholicism had been officially recognized as the country's religion; in a Fascist state the Pope had his own sovereign land; and now, from that very land, his voice would soon be

heard all over the world. The Church was far from exercising the power it had before 1870, but it was now attempting to be recognized as a political and moral force in the international scene.

The opening of Radio Vaticana

On 12 February 1931 the EIAR stations, as well as the official Fascist Press, reported the opening of the Vatican station. *Il Popolo d'Italia*, for instance, printed the following: 'Special broadcast from Vatican City for the inauguration of the Radio Station'.⁴⁴ *L'Osservatore Romano* narrated the event in detail, offering an almost romantic rendition of the day. It is worth reporting most of the text to give a glimpse of the deep sentiments of joy and exultation that surrounded this historical moment:

The size of the rooms of the new Radio Station did not allow many people to be present during the ceremony; however, a select and highly important group of celebrities was allowed to act as the audience of the Holy Father....Since 3:00 p.m. all the rooms of the Radio Station have been kept empty...to arrive there it is a beautiful walk down the pathways of the magnificent Vatican Gardens...Inside everything is ready for the inauguration. The engineers from Marchese Marconi's company and the operators who are taking their orders from Fr. Gianfranceschi are all ready. The Radio is already operating, in contact with the radiotelegraphic and radiotelephonic stations of the world: in just a few moments however, the electricity will be turned off to be turned back on by His Holiness.

At 3:30 p.m. Senator Marchese Marconi arrives with his wife. The great man goes immediately in the amplifiers' room, puts on the headsets and begins the transatlantic conversations: the voices come from New York, Melbourne, Quebec, etc. And they are very clear. Together with Senator Marchese Marconi in the room are also the Marchese Solari, the engineers Mathieu, Santamaria, Esposito, Isted, and Jackson.

Fr. Gianfranceschi tirelessly imparts the last dispositions: he is besieged by questions and to all he responds with his usual smile which is fuelled today by a special kind of sentiment...⁴⁵

The day continued with the arrival of the select few who had been invited to the ceremony. *L'Osservatore Romano* gave an exact list of all those present. Only one foreigner was present from the British Embassy.⁴⁶

Immediately before the arrival of Pope Pius XI, Monsignor Zampini gave the official blessing that had been written by the Holy Father specifically for this occasion because, as *La Tribuna* points out, 'there were not, until now, any prayers or blessings created specifically for radio like there are for the telegraph, the railway, and other modern inventions'.⁴⁷ The prayer was written in Latin,⁴⁸ yet another way to ensure that the official language of the Church be also considered the best liaison to bring religion and science together. Once again, *L'Osservatore Romano* meticulously reported the moments preceding the arrival of the Pope:

The enthusiasm is intense...In the studio, Solari and Mathieu transmit to the world, in short segments, the details of the important moment: at 16:10, end of the communication with New York; at 16:12, the arrival of His Holiness is imminent; at 16:15 Mathieu and Solari repeat the announcement in French and English; at 16:20, trumpets sound: the entrance of His Holiness...now the entire Radio Station is immersed in deep silence: the powerful machines are quiet, the lights of the amplifiers are turned off, the whole world awaits; in a few moments the spark will turn on that will give much glory to God and to His Church.⁴⁹

After the official visit through the entire radio station, Pope Pius XI sat in the amplifiers' room with Cardinals Pacelli and Gasparri, Marchese Marconi, Father Gianfranceschi and two engineers. The Italian inventor spoke first:

I have the highest honour of announcing that in just a few moments the Most Venerable Pope Pius XI will inaugurate the Radio Station of Vatican City. The electromagnetic waves will transport through the air all over the world his words of peace and blessing. For almost twenty centuries the Roman Pontifical has spread the word of his Divine teaching in the world; but this is the first time that His lively voice will be heard simultaneously on the entire surface of the earth. With the help of God who puts so many mysterious forces of nature at our disposal, I was able to prepare this instrument which will give the faithful worldwide the comfort of hearing the voice of the Holy Father. Most Holy Father, I give to You the work that Your Holiness was kind enough to assign to me; its accomplishment is consecrated today by Your Presence; deign Yourself, Holy Father, to let the world hear your venerable word...⁵⁰

The first radio broadcast by Pope Pius XI was written by him in Latin. Cardinal Confalonieri explained the reasons behind the choice of the language:

...to whoever asked him why he had used Latin and had cited almost exclusively words from the Sacred Scripture, Pius XI answered that Latin was indeed the universal language of the Church and, in that truly ecumenical meeting the word of God, *Pater et Dominus universae creaturae*, would have reached, undoubtedly, everyone.⁵¹

This is arguable, of course, since most people did not speak Latin and would need a translation of the broadcast in their own, respective languages; however, since Latin had indeed always been recognized as the official international and liturgical language of the Church and of science, it probably seemed like the best choice for such a solemn occasion. The use of Latin instead of Italian also separated the Catholic Church from Fascist Italy and officially, for the first time, legitimized the status of the Catholic Church through its own radio station, worldwide. Finally, it is plausible that Pope Pius XI chose Latin because it was the international language used by the Roman Catholic Church to communicate directly with its clergy, who could then translate it for the general

population. Because Pius XI did not speak English, the only other option was Italian, which would have been even more difficult to translate for non-Italian speakers abroad.

At exactly 4:49 p.m., Pope Pius XI began the first ever official broadcast made by a Pope, letting faithful everywhere experience this unique moment and witness the power of the new Vatican radio station. The message began with an exhortation to all people and creatures to listen to the word of God. Using direct quotes from the Bible, the Pontificate began:

...we speak fully to all things and all people, using the same words that belong to the Scripture and telling them now and in the future: listen, oh heavens, to what I am about to say, listen, oh earth, to the words coming from my mouth, listen all of you who are united by a similar intent, rich or poor, hear and listen oh faraway people...⁵²

The tone was epic and sombre. Pope Pius XI was fully aware of his voice's impact and of the moment's significance. The rest of the broadcast addressed different groups of people with specific messages starting, of course, with thanking God and Jesus Christ for this opportunity. That was followed by a message for Catholics, then for religious hierarchies, religious people in general, missionaries, the faithful everywhere.

Addressing Protestants and Jews, the Pope was unequivocal, demanding that if they wanted to become Christians, they would have to do it his way:

Our thoughts and Our words also go out to you although you are still far away from faith and from the unity with Jesus Christ. For you every day We offer prayers and sacrifices to God, asking ardently that He illuminate you with His light and bring you together with the lambs who listen to His voice, so that only one sheepfold and only one shepherd may exist.⁵³

This invocation was followed by an appeal to rulers and their domestic servants; then to the wealthy and the poor; to factory workers and their employers; and finally, to the

suffering and persecuted. Only in the sections addressing the rulers and their people as well as the persecuted were political and social undertones present. However, it is also true that the message's whole nature was one of presumed education, where the Catholic faith, through the words of the Pope, placed itself in a position of leadership and guidance, defining the truth of beliefs and practices concerning all aspects of society. *Radio Vaticana* was now the best medium to achieve this old, yet still very much relevant, objective.

When addressing the rulers of nations, Pope Pius XI was careful to keep his words general and non-accusatory, although he gave a clear reminder that there is no higher authority than God:

...We say to those who govern that they should lead with justice and compassion, to build rather than to ruin, remembering always that there is no power that does not come from God and that to God they will ultimately have to answer.⁵⁴

The message was then directed to domestic servants with an admonition that following the will of the governing forces is akin to following the will of God, a special note that would have certainly pleased the current Italian authorities:

To the servants we then say that they must obey their superiors, not as men but as God, knowing that those who resist against legitimate authority are fighting against God's wishes and are therefore preparing their own condemnation.⁵⁵

The final segment of the speech spoke to people persecuted by the 'enemies of God,'⁵⁶ offering material support when possible as well as prayers and exhortations toward charity and compassion by those inflicting the pain. Overall the first broadcast did not contain any surprising elements, other than the fact that it was spoken in Latin. No direct mention was made about the recent reconciliation with Italy and the end of the *Questione*

*Romana*⁵⁷ nor were any overtly condemning statements made regarding Communist countries or Socialism.

Reaction to the opening of Radio Vaticana in Italy

The Fascist Press was quick to express enthusiasm regarding the opening of the Catholic radio station. *La Tribuna* stated in one of its editorials written by the newspaper's editor Forges Davanzati:

The Man who can speak to the world has launched His message ...thanks to the new miracle created by the Italian genius, for the first time in history the live voice of the Vicar of God was physically and simultaneously heard at the extreme borders of the earth. And the voice was emanating from this Rome, which God has placed at the centre of humanity: the apostolic message was expressed in the language that God has given, a decree that does not change, a universal task, the language of Rome...The event that, although simple, happened in the Vatican Rome, reconciled for ever with the Fascist and Italian Rome, doesn't only mark a step in scientific progress or a powerful and material example for the diffusion of the Idea. In a world where the negation of the Absolute threatens to sterilize the very seeds of Life, the voice of the Pontificate has brought up, once again, the appeal to the Laws that Rome is a guardian of: in the Roman language, from the eternal Rome, an appeal to the eternal Laws.⁵⁸

Fascist authorities clearly attempted to appropriate the papal broadcast's content so as to be illuminated by the reflected glory of the event. References to the Concordat were meant to remind the Italian people and the world that the Catholic Church had accepted Fascism and that Fascism had accepted the Catholic Church. Therefore, all faithful Catholics should obey the 'legitimate authority'⁵⁹ of the Fascist government. Interesting was also the reference to the "Vatican Rome" forever united with the "Fascist and Italian Rome", a marriage of ideals and objectives so to speak, which represented yet another layer of the regime's propaganda.

Not surprisingly, *L'Osservatore Romano* reported the reactions and preparations to the event by the Italian people, colouring its own descriptions with enthusiasm and demonstrating indirectly the Fascist regime's willingness to facilitate such preparations:

In Rome the radio broadcast has had the largest and most intense diffusion. There was no receiver left unused yesterday afternoon. In the homes, people gathered around the radio; very crowded were also all the public places that had a radio. Special speakers were installed outside many stores and newspaper offices. The crowds gathered everywhere possible, creating traffic jams. The broadcast was extremely clear...Under the Colonna Gallery the broadcast was transmitted through the speaker of the offices of the *Popolo di Roma*...in San Claudio street a large crowd assembled in front of the D'Amico firm, which had placed a special speaker with an amplifier of the first floor of the building...the same was done in Nazionale Street, in Vittorio Emanuele Square...everywhere the message of the Holy Father was heard and listened to attentively...⁶⁰

Other Fascist-controlled newspapers around the country chronicled mass reactions to the broadcast with the fervour typical of the Fascist climate and of the epoch. The *Gazzetta del Popolo* in Turin described it this way:

The Italian metropolis of radio experienced an unforgettable hour between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. We must also keep in mind that the wait for the word of the Pope had become almost feverish with anticipation in Turin, where many important missionary and ecclesiastic institutes have their home base...some nuns had broken their vow of seclusion for this event by allowing a radio in their quarters...huge crowds gathered around radio receivers everywhere, listening with reverence to the voice of the Holy Father in Latin even when they could not understand Him. In a public hall an old laundress, after hearing the whole speech in Latin was asked whether she had understood anything and she replied in dialect, *I understood everything, He said we should love each other and pray so that there will be peace in the world and there would no longer be the wealthy and the poor, all will become children of God...*⁶¹

Interestingly, what the laundress understood was not exactly the same as what Pope Pius XI had said. The Pontiff had indeed exhorted everyone to love each other, pray for peace and show compassion, but he had not, at any point during the broadcast, eliminated the class separation between the wealthy and the poor. If anything, Pope Pius XI had encouraged subjects to be obedient to the worldly authority as if to God, and to remember that disobedience would be punished in the hereafter. The Italian woman's understanding shows, ironically, the futile yearning for social equality that was certainly not appreciated by the Vatican or the regime. Yes the Catholic Church wanted to ensure peace on earth and equality of people in front of God, but this equality was not meant as an elimination of social divisions but rather as a spiritual, collective consciousness. In a way, the very selection of Latin, an ancient language that was normally only understood by Church leadership clearly demarked this objective. The *Gazzetta del Popolo* went on to describe more reactions to the papal message:

News from Clavieres report that the Princes of Piedmont returned to the hotel to listen to the broadcast, which was heard clearly in all the valleys. In Courmayeur the alpine guides came together in a circle, with pictures of Pope Pius XI, of Mussolini and of the King, and genuflected, listening to the word of the Pontificate, himself a great rock climber...⁶²

Again in Northern Italy, *La Gazzetta di Venezia* stated:

People were even in line in front of the radio equipment, women, men, young, old, children, with the same demeanour one would see in Church. Mixed in the crowd were also priests...and now the voice is heard, at first quiet and slow, then acquiring more and more speed and warmth...the harmony of Latin, liturgical language, takes on a particular clarity. Even this is a miracle, that the noblest ancient language is making modern scientific equipment vibrate, creation of the Italian genius...⁶³

The rest of the article made observations regarding the use of Latin and its impact on the people. It highlighted once again the point that was made earlier regarding the Catholic Church and class divisions but in a sense took it a step further, unmasking a deep-seated arrogance toward the needs of the faithful and the collective intelligence of the masses:

Some, who know Latin, can understand the sublime concepts of the address, but for the others the words are even more enchanting, an unexpressed harmony, like the prayers and the hymns of the Church, so interesting for simple souls who, although not understanding the word guess, or better, feel their enlivening spirit.⁶⁴

Fernando Bea⁶⁵ adopted the same philosophical attitude of the Pope, although the reasoning makes little or no sense since Latin was only the language for the religious elite.⁶⁶ It would be very interesting instead to know the thoughts of the anti-Fascist, dissenting Press regarding the opening of *Radio Vaticana*. As Rosengarten⁶⁷ points out, the Church discouraged Catholics in the Press to express opinions that diverged from the Vatican's official line. Moreover, by this time the Italian Press had been put completely under Fascist control. The only publications expressing outward dissent and condemnation would have been clandestine or smuggled in from foreign countries.

Regardless, it is important to realize that, other than the speeches made by Mussolini in *Piazza Venezia*, which were broadcast and amplified for optimum listening, the broadcasts from *Radio Vaticana* represented one of the first truly mass-mediated experiences in Italian history. For a people who, until the coming of Fascism and the empty promises made to them by Mussolini had been poor and underprivileged and for a nation that was still largely a third world country, such an achievement must have been truly glorious. For the first time it was an Italian scientist who had advanced scientific development and it was the Italian religion, Catholicism, that was taking a place of

spiritual leadership. In this context it is easier to understand, perhaps, why so many Italians supported Fascism despite its intrinsically totalitarian nature. The new regime played well on the vulnerability of its people and offered itself as a means to alleviate long-standing collective inferiority complexes. Mussolini transformed Italy's Constitutional Monarchy by offering political and economic stability, exalted the concept of family and paid women for having more children. With the opening of *Radio Vaticana* the process was complete: Fascism would lead Italy through temporal, material development while the Catholic Church had become officially the spiritual guide of the nation, now expanding its mission over the airwaves.

International Reactions to the opening of Radio Vaticana

The Western world participated in *Radio Vaticana*'s inauguration by reporting extensively on the preparations, the actual event, and the reactions that followed the papal broadcast. In England, the *London News Agency* published a press release:

The Pope's Voice-Opening of Vatican Wireless Station-The Pope will inaugurate the Vatican Wireless Station on Thursday, February 12 at 15:30 G.M.T. states Marchese Marconi's Wireless telegraph Company in London...The Pope will speak a few words in Latin which will be repeated by other speakers in various languages⁶⁸

The opening of *Radio Vaticana* and the Pope's first broadcast was also noted in an internal circulating memo at the BBC, which was followed by an official BBC announcement. The memo contained the same information relayed by the *London News Agency* but it added a more detailed narration of the day's events. It also stated that in the United States the Pope's broadcast would be received by all NBC stations.⁶⁹ The day

after the BBC's internal memo, it released the following statement revealing, interestingly, that some transmitters would not be broadcasting the ceremony:

The BBC announces that, subject to reception conditions being satisfactory, an attempt will be made tomorrow (Thursday, February 12) to relay the proceedings on the occasion of the opening of the Vatican Broadcasting Station by His Holiness Pope Pius XI. The ceremony is timed for approximately 3:30 p.m. and after an introductory speech by Marchese Marconi the Pope himself will broadcast a short address which will subsequently be translated into various languages. This relay will be broadcast by all transmitters of the BBC, except the London and Midland regional transmitters, which, from 3:00 to 3.45 p.m., will transmit the weekly Evensong from Westminster Abbey normally broadcast in the National programmes. Advertised programmes will be continued on the conclusion of the Vatican relay.⁷⁰

It would be interesting to know the rationale behind the BBC's decision⁷¹ not to broadcast the ceremony on the two regional transmitters. Perhaps it was intended as a sign of respect toward the country's non-Catholic, Protestant majority.

The British Press also closely followed the event. A few days before the opening of *Radio Vaticana* the *Morning Post* wrote:

Vatican Broadcast-The final programme for the inauguration on Thursday of the new Vatican wireless station has been announced. Contrary to general expectations, the Pope will not deliver a message to the world, but will merely utter a few phrases in Latin...⁷²

The short article went on to list the already familiar details of the ceremony. However, the passage's tone seemed to indicate a negative attitude toward the choice of Latin as the language of the first broadcast. What was not said, but was certainly implied, was the disappointment that for such an important occasion, the Catholic Church would choose to

speak in a language that belonged not to the people but to the elites. The next day, 10 February 1931, the *Morning Post* wrote again:

The Pope's World Broadcast-Message in Latin-The tests at the Vatican Station have been so successful that, as already anticipated by the *Morning Post*, Pope Pius XI will, on the inauguration of the HVJ station on February 12, himself give a message over the microphones addressed to the whole world. His Holiness will speak in Latin, and his message will be one of hope and peace, concluding with the Apostolic benediction, literally as well as symbolically, *urbi et orbi...*⁷³

This article seems less negative than the previous one, perhaps because the Press had been given an idea of the papal broadcast's content.

An article in the *Daily Telegraph* hinted that there was some uncertainty as to whether the BBC would be relaying the Pope's message. The reasons for this hesitation are unclear. Perhaps the BBC had anticipated the technical difficulties that did indeed occur, or perhaps it was concerned with the papal message itself. In a largely Protestant nation, such a broadcast may not have been appreciated:

The Pope's broadcast speech to the world...will be delivered at 3.45 (G.M.T.) on Thursday afternoon on a wavelength of 19.84 meters. Arrangements have also been concluded for a relay on 441 meters from the Palomba station, near Rome...Although no definite decision has yet been reached, it is learnt that it is almost certain that the BBC will relay the Pope's speech. An official of the BBC explained yesterday that there were certain difficulties in the way, but they were very hopeful of overcoming them. Present intentions are to relay the address on the National wavelength.⁷⁴

As was noted earlier the broadcast was indeed aired by the BBC and reactions to the Pope's first address were reported by all major European and American newspapers. In England, again, *The Universe* wrote:

To give an idea of the impressive audience of the Pope, in the relatively small space of the U.K. and of Northern Ireland, there are 3,159,000 radio licenses and, in general, every radio represents one family.⁷⁵

The same newspaper went on to organize a contest where readers could send in a short essay describing how they listened to the voice of the Pope. The best entry would win five pounds.⁷⁶ The *Daily Telegraph* continued its steady coverage of the event, this time exalting the new accomplishment of the Vatican state:

Yesterday, in the day following the inauguration of the creation of the Vatican State, Pope Pius XI spoke to the city and to the world in a way that had never been dreamt of during the times when all of Christianity looked to Rome as the centre of faith. The inauguration of the Radio Station "HVJ", the most recent among all, represents the complete fusion of what vibrates in the modern world and what is most ancient in Europe...From the small building on the Vatican hill the message of the Pope was heard all over the world...⁷⁷

The *Times* of London reported that Pope Pius XI delivered the address with dignity and found it moving⁷⁸ while the *News Chronicle* stated:

For the first time the voice of a Pope was heard in London, and by millions of his religious subjects all over the world...the 3500 Catholics in the Westminster Roman Catholic Cathedral remained standing to listen to the voice of the Pontificate for fifteen minutes. It was the voice of an old person, but it was still strong and firm. Latin was pronounced the Italian way that is commonly used in the British Catholic Churches: there was also a musical quality to his voice which is natural in Italians. The voice of an erudite, rhythmic in the sentences and precise...⁷⁹

In France also, as expected the radio broadcast was received with much enthusiasm by the Catholic majority. *La Victoire* commented:

The message of Pope Pius XI was truly an eloquent excerpt of sacred oratory. It is a sumptuous paraphrase of the immortal Sermon of the Mount, addressed to all men of the twentieth century...⁸⁰

However in France the reception was not very clear, as in England. Many in the popular Press speculated that non-sympathizing Communist countries had jammed the broadcast frequencies. Citing a French newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano* ventured that the reception difficulties might be the work of Soviet radio stations:

News that has arrived to our newspaper indicated that the Holy Father was heard in every part of the world...only in some parts of Europe the reception was not perfect. The newspaper *Echo de Paris* has put forth the surprising supposition that it may have been the Soviet stations which were trying to create jamming. However, a technician explains the existence of a silence zone in relation to short wave transmissions.⁸¹

Similar comments were expressed by the Fascist newspaper *La Tribuna* on 14 February 1931:

The broadcast of the Pope's address...was heard by Catholics in Paris with great interest. The atmospheric conditions however, were terrible for the entire duration of the transmission: therefore the words of the Pope were heard with great difficulty. But since immediately after the end of the broadcast the other transmissions were heard extremely clearly, some have expressed the opinion that the Vatican emission may have purposely been tampered with...⁸²

It seems at least plausible that such an attempt could have indeed been made against the new Catholic radio station. The reception was clear everywhere else in the world, from Australia to Canada, which aired it through the Canadian Broadcasting Company.

In the United States, references to the broadcasts were just as numerous and enthusiastic, highlighting the importance of Catholicism in the country. An editorial in

the *New York Herald* expressed this opinion, which was clearly shared by the media across the globe:

Very few events in the history of the world could ever surpass by the impression created and by the intrinsic meaning, the message that the Head of the Holy See in Rome has placed on this earth upon which, at least theoretically, is extended his mission of shepherd of the people. It is something that none in the long succession of Popes who have preceded him could ever foresee. It is a miracle of science no less impressive than the miracles of faith.⁸³

The *New York Times* began reporting the imminent opening of *Radio Vaticana* on 11 February 1931. The first article⁸⁴ gave a detailed account of the Catholic radio station's technical components, which went on the air with the call letters HVJ:

Senator Marconi's message described the transmitter as following the design of those used in the British Imperial Service, which are of the beam sending, high speed type. It consists of four main panels and is capable of sending both telephony and telegraphy...a high degree of signal modulation is used, being 80 percent, the maximum power being thirteen to fifteen kilowatts output.⁸⁵

Finally the article went on to boast about the special receiver installed at the Vatican:

A special receiver, partly made of standard parts of the normal telephone and high speed Marconi receiver and telephone terminal, four wires, two wire equipment will secure good telephone and telegraph duplex communication between Vatican City and any part of the world.⁸⁶

The next day, the *New York Times* published another article on its front page entitled, 'World will hear Pope Pius on radio today; He will speak in both Latin and Italian'. The article repeated the information already given, but also noted that the Pope's message would be translated into English, French, Italian, German, Polish, Spanish, and Ethiopian.⁸⁷ The article stated that 'the broadcasters estimate that the invisible audience

in tune with the ceremony at the dedication of the Vatican City radio station will be the largest that has ever listened to a single programme'. Specifically,

The programme from Rome will be intercepted at several receiving points in this country for the WABC system, including the American Telephone and Telegraph company radiophone service, carried by wire lines to the headquarters of the Columbia Broadcasting System...and broadcast over more than seventy stations in its coast-to-coast chain. These networks will include several Canadian stations...In all, it is likely that combined American broadcasting facilities will total well over 150 stations...⁸⁸

On 13 February 1931, the *New York Times* reported the following in a front page article:

Pope Pius XI, formerly a 'prisoner' in the Vatican but now ruler of an independent State, celebrated today the ninth anniversary of his enthronement as Supreme Pontiff by the vastest broadcast ever made. For the first time a Pope departed from the limited means of communication by encyclical letters to speak to the hundreds of millions in the world's radio audience from the new Vatican broadcasting station...He begged the Catholic hierarchy to remain faithful to their calling; he asked the faithful to be models of all Christian virtues...He urged rulers to govern with justice and moderation and asked subjects to obey their rulers...He assured the workers and employers that harmony would result in prosperity for both...⁸⁹

The article stressed the emphasis put by Pope Pius XI on peace, both spiritual and societal. Also on the same day an article on page fourteen discussed the great interest of Catholics in Quebec:

The Catholic Province of Quebec took full advantage of the opportunity to hear the voice of Pope Pius XI in the broadcast from Vatican City today, receiving apparatuses having been set up in most of the large Church institutions and residences. In the Archbishop's palace here four receiving sets were installed in halls and corridors and a large body of the city's clergy gathered there to hear the

message of the Pontiff. Similar arrangements were made in schools and colleges throughout the region...⁹⁰

The same issue of the *New York Times* also reproduced the full text of the speech in Latin as well as a series of articles commenting on the speech, especially on its emphasis on world peace and on its clear reception around the globe.⁹¹

Over the next two weeks many articles appeared in the international Press, discussing a number of issues dealing with radio technology, development and with *Radio Vaticana*. Two articles in the *New York Times* however, are worth mentioning because they discuss, either overtly or indirectly, the dissatisfaction of the Catholic Church with the Fascist government. The Lateran Treaty had been signed but it did not mean, as noted earlier, an end to the struggles over the cultural and religious control of Italian society, something that could not be achieved without also controlling the politics that legislated such society. On 14 February 1931, Marchese Marconi gave an interview via short wave to the editor of the Associated Press, C.E.Butterfield. The first in its kind, the interview reported the Italian scientist's negative opinions regarding radio restrictions. In the inventor's own words, he said:

We were also very fortunate to have been given a free hand by the Vatican authorities; and I think also our success was due to the fact that we were not tied down by rules and specifications. It is much better when one has a free hand than when one is tied down to data by some red tape imposed by government officials and by gentlemen who understand less about it than they should.⁹²

The following day the *New York Times* published on its third page an article entitled, 'Pope Says Fascists Permit Immorality'. It discussed a recent speech given by the Pontiff to a group of Lenten preachers in which Pope Pius XI condemned the immoral customs permitted by the Fascist government, a direct breach of the Lateran Treaty:

Pope Pius today condemned the Italian government for violating the Lateran Treaty by permitting immoral newspapers, movies and vaudeville shows, profanation of the Sabbath and Protestant propaganda...’the toleration of such evils is not only contrary to Christian doctrine but is contrary also to the specific promises of the Italian government...Article I of the Lateran Treaty states that the Catholic religion is the only Italian State religion. The Italian government bound itself to prevent all things which are contrary to Rome’s sacred character...⁹³

The same speech and commentary by the Pope was reported in a front page article of *L’osservatore Romano* of the same day. However, also significantly, on 15 February 1931, the *New York Times* reported that, effective immediately, *L’Osservatore Romano* would no longer be considered the “official organ” of the Church:

That term is applied to the Acta Apostolicae Sedis, for whose content alone the government of Vatican City holds itself responsible. In the daily paper the responsible parties are those who sign the articles—from the Pope down, thus editorial comments in *L’Osservatore* may be official or it may be not.⁹⁴

Curiously, a close look at the Catholic newspaper shows that this change was not reported in any of its issues. Nevertheless, it can be hypothesized that this was a strategically important move for the Catholic Church, one that was closely tied to the creation of *Radio Vaticana* and its immediate impact on the faithful masses everywhere. But even more importantly, the decision of the Vatican to take away the “official status” of the newspaper meant that more freedom could be allowed to *L’Osservatore Romano* to discuss potentially controversial, tense topics without fully compromising the official position of the Church.

Radio Vaticana before the war

Until the beginning of the Second World War, *Radio Vaticana* had two objectives, namely (1) to connect the Vatican and the Pontiff with the Roman Catholic

clergy and the faithful everywhere, spreading religious and increasingly more political points of view; and (2) to let the world hear live the voice of the Holy Father. The need for communication and information took precedence over the lighter, more entertaining side of programming.⁹⁵ A few days after the first official broadcast Father Gianfranceschi and the Academy began publishing a new periodical, *Nuncius Radiophonicus*, which would be a collection of the scientific contributions read by various scientists on the air.⁹⁶ The first broadcast occurred on 19 April 1931 with a speech by Pope Pius XI:

If the first inauguration (of *Radio Vaticana*) was the sacred inauguration to faith, this second inauguration is sacred to science. Then we broadcast the apostolic word of faith, now we have broadcast the word of science. The Divine Scripture tells us that just as God is the creator of faith, so He is the creator of science.⁹⁷

The Pope's message was followed by many other speeches given by various Academy members. *L'Osservatore Romano* gave a detailed description of the first scientific news broadcast on 21 April, 1931. At this point therefore, the only types of news emanating from the Vatican radio station were of a scientific nature. Nothing political had yet been included, which was perhaps an expedient way to stay away from the Fascist censorship of the *Stefani* news agency, the official Fascist news agency operating out of the Ministry of Communication. Even though many requests were made to the radio station regarding an expansion in programming, in July 1931 *Radio Vaticana* published an official communiqué:

We are not, now or in the future, going to develop radio broadcasts. We do have, however, fixed times when we do radiophonic exercises...during these times we give you information, news, and we read letters from the missions...on Sunday we have liturgical readings directed especially to the sick.⁹⁸

The news that was being broadcast during these fixed times was taken at first primarily from *L'Osservatore Romano*. Not much later, though, Father Gianfranceschi and his team of Jesuits began to rely also on news emanating from the *Agenzia Fides*.⁹⁹ Created in 1927, the Vatican news agency concentrated specifically on information regarding the missionary world and was sheltered under the umbrella of the office of Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith. In 1931 it operated in four languages, namely English, French, Italian, and Spanish with the addition of German in 1935.¹⁰⁰ Also on 8 April 1931 the Vatican station began broadcasting to China, an important target audience because of its potential for converts.¹⁰¹ Professor Monticone made the interesting observation that, by broadcasting selected events happening around the missionary world, the Catholic Church demonstrated indirectly a specific political attitude toward certain issues and used the *Agenzia Fides* much like national broadcasting companies had done at the beginning with their own Press agencies.

Inside Italy, however, Pope Pius XI was forced to take a stance against the Fascist government by publishing on 29 June 1931 the famous encyclical, *Non abbiamo bisogno* (We have no need). Once again the crisis between Church and state was caused by the same themes that had slowed down and, at times, stopped the negotiations between both entities; now they were resurfacing and causing severe tensions. Pope Pius XI's objective was to defend the *Azione Cattolica* against organized persecution by the Italian government, which wanted all groups to dissemble and be incorporated in the various available Fascist organizations. Also, the Pontiff proclaimed again the natural rights of the family and the spiritual rights of the Church over the youth. In a way, it was impossible for the Church to remain silent in light of police aggression and persecutions

against Catholic organizations, the clergy, and the youth. The Vatican claimed that the regime's behaviour was completely inconsistent with the promises and the agreements made in the Lateran Accords. The Pope passionately defended the *Azione Cattolica* against the regime's attack and accused the latter of monopolizing the education of young people. However, the underlying element of understanding between the Catholic Church and the Fascist state was still there. For the Pope,

condemning the monopolizing tendency of Fascism and the ideology that inspired it did not at all mean a condemnation of the party of the regime itself. He still remembered the good deeds of the regime toward religion and, even more importantly, the advantages that the agreement with the Italian government would give to the Holy See.¹⁰²

Eventually, an agreement was reached on 2 September 1931 between Mussolini and the Jesuit priest Tacchi Venturi, who had been appointed by the Pope as intermediary. The new accord recognized the *Azione Cattolica* in its diocesan nature and its subordination to the bishops who would be responsible for choosing its managers.¹⁰³ This move was already a compromise between the two parties, because the bishops would certainly only put into office individuals not at odds with the regime. The agreement also confirmed once again that the Catholic organization would not involve itself in political or union-related matters but would concentrate on religious issues. It also refrained from covering sports-related activities, which were always deemed by Mussolini as useful in spreading the regime's propaganda.¹⁰⁴ Although it may have appeared on the surface that the Catholic Church had lost the battle, in reality the Holy See was given the opportunity to control even more intensely the *Azione Cattolica* through the bishops, something that was wanted by the regime as well, because it was seen as less threatening than a lay Catholic organization.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the control that the

Church lost over the youth via the *Azione Cattolica* was balanced by the renewed religious involvement of the Church within Fascist youth groups. Therefore even after the crisis of 1931, both Church and state created a deeper bond, one that would give the Vatican the impetus to intensify the “catholization” of Fascist Italy.¹⁰⁶

It is important to note that the attitude of the Catholic Church toward Fascism during the 1930’s and into the beginning of the Second World War was not monolithic. As shown in the previous chapter, after the desegregation of the *Partito Popolare*, some anti-Fascist Catholics moved to other countries, while others stayed in Italy and removed themselves from politics;¹⁰⁷ for the most part, though, the attitude of the Pope and his clergy as well as that of the *Azione Cattolica* was certainly not hostile to the regime for the very same reasons that prompted the Church to negotiate the Lateran Accords: the benefits outweighed the disadvantages. Indeed, until the collapse of Fascism, the main moments of crisis between Church and state did not happen over ideological or moral issues, such as the institution of the Italian racial laws. Rather, they occurred because the religious authorities perceived a loss in their sphere of moral control over the Italian people. This period of Church history was characterized by the Church’s need to claim complete spiritual control over Italian society, combating Protestantism, atheism and Bolshevism. The *Universita’ Cattolica* (Catholic University) for instance, employed a number of Catholic academics to, as Verucci points out,

...re-establish, in distinct contrast to the modern culture and society, a united Christian society like that of the Middle Ages, the social reign of Christ...but open to the contributions of modern science...The concrete objective is to create, on the basis of these principles, a Catholic managing class...From this moment on the battle becomes more pronounced, with the objective of marking Fascism with Catholic traits, to assimilate it; and, in particular, to conquer a prominent position

in the Italian cultural life, to infiltrate their graduates in the state schools and universities.¹⁰⁸

In addition, the *Universita' Cattolica* created a new programme for the study of the law, one that was permeated with Fascist doctrine. For example, professors of political geography and economics 'supported the expansionist and imperialist of the regime'.¹⁰⁹

After 1931 the *Azione Cattolica* continued its significant activity in Italian society by promoting morality in schools and at large. Some of these initiatives included the campaign against scandalous dancing, immodest fashion, pornography, and the limitations on births. Campaigns were implemented to support private schools, the *Universita' Cattolica*, religious vocations and missionary work, and to combat Protestant propaganda, among many others.¹¹⁰

Some of the most significant propaganda campaigns created by the Church through the *Azione Cattolica* were directed toward the mass media. The first one, called "buona stampa," (the good Press)¹¹¹ designated printed material that was considered proper and in line with the teachings of the Church. Pope Pius XI had dedicated an encyclical to it in 1923, *Rerum Omnium*, and he had also supported the international fair of the Catholic Press in 1936.¹¹²

With regards to film, the Church's initial attitude had been of extreme concern toward the potential dangers it posed toward Catholic morality.¹¹³ In an encyclical for the American bishops¹¹⁴ Pope Pius XI praised the League of Decency, an organization that acted as a watchdog for morality in the United States, and exhorted the bishops to demand the application of Catholic principles of morality in film.

Curiously, *Radio Vaticana* remained isolated, in a sense, from the changes occurring in Italian political life; isolated because it did not truly, initially at least, reflect

or comment on the shifts happening inside the Church as well as its relation with the Fascist state. One could say that at first the voice of *Radio Vaticana* remained silent in the Italian political realm, a modest representation at best, working instead on discussing scientific discoveries. Moreover, regardless of political struggles, for the entire duration of Fr. Gianfranceschi's directorship of *Radio Vaticana*, the Catholic station remained primarily the vehicle to broadcast the Pope's voice, creating for the first time a mass-mediated image of the Supreme Pontiff:

The immediacy of the sound of the voice of Pope Pius XI, broadcast over the radio, was maybe the main element in the creation of a new image of the Pope, with a greater understanding of his authority and prominence in the entire Catholic world that was now his direct subject through radio...¹¹⁵

The Pope's new image was one of familiarity and authority with a paternal touch. The radio broadcasts created a new and certainly much more intense bond between the Pontiff and his people and also between distant Catholic populations and the Vatican itself. Some examples of such broadcasts clearly show the pervasive presence of the Supreme Pontiff on the airwaves: on 15 May 1931 Pius XI broadcast a speech related to the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*; on 27 December of the same year, *Radio Vaticana* aired the Pontiff's commentary on the closing of XV centenary *Concilio di Efeso*¹¹⁶ while on 12 February 1932 he spoke of the tenth anniversary of his crowning. Again on 28 February 1932 Pope Pius XI broadcast a message for Catholics who were being persecuted in the East while in June of the same year he commented on the closing of the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin. Additionally, Pope Pius XI's voice was heard in conjunction with the *Anno Santo* (Holy Year) in 1933 and starting in 1934 more speeches

were added to support the meetings of faithful Roman Catholics around the world. Finally, in 1936 the Holy Father began the annual tradition of the Christmas broadcast.¹¹⁷

The effort in programming was matched by the technical efforts of Marchese Marconi and the Jesuits to keep *Radio Vaticana* at the cutting edge of radio technology. In 1932 new super short-wave equipment was installed, placing *Radio Vaticana* at the avant-garde of international broadcasting and in 1933 microwaves connected the Vatican with the summer residence of Pope Pius XI, *Castelgandolfo*, approximately twenty miles away. Finally, *Radio Vaticana* was connected to the Italian network and, subsequently with the European networks.¹¹⁸ In 1936, *Radio Vaticana* was officially admitted in the International Radiophonic Union.

After the death of Father Gianfranceschi in 1934, the directorship of *Radio Vaticana* was given to another Jesuit priest, Father Filippo Soccorsi, who would manage the station until his death in 1953. The new director was an interesting choice. He was the chair of the department of physics at the *Universita' Gregoriana* and, according to a secret file¹¹⁹ created about him by the Fascist government, not sympathetic to the regime. Part of the document stated that Father Soccorsi was, 'a creature of Father Ledochowski (Victor General-Society of Jesus), of contrary sentiments toward the regime, intense hatred toward Nazi Germany and its leader.'¹²⁰ Professor Monticone points out that the information found in the file may not be completely accurate; nonetheless, it is safe to assume that the Jesuit priest was probably not friendly to the regime. Why he would have been chosen for this position is unclear. Perhaps Pope Pius XI wanted to keep *Radio Vaticana* as far away as possible from the influence of Fascist propaganda. After all, it may have been the best way to balance the Church's position in the eyes of the

world, especially in light of the contributions made by Father Facchinetti and others on the Fascist radio stations. Moreover, *Radio Vaticana* was getting ready for a new developmental phase, one that would see the creation of an editorial office and the beginning of more regular programming. The Society of Jesus had representatives in all the highest sectors of the Roman curia and, because of its close relationship to the highest Vatican authorities, could best represent and be the carrier of the papal message to the world.¹²¹ Its ability to do it successfully was proven by the articles published in the well-established Jesuit magazine, *La Civiltà Cattolica*. This function was going to be of paramount importance in light of the threats of Nazism, Communism, and the adherence of the Vatican to General Franco during the Spanish Civil War.

In 1936 Pope Pius XI appointed Father Friedrich Muckermann and Father Joseph Ledit as directors of *Radio Vaticana*'s programming, marking a definite shift toward more involvement in political matters. Both Jesuits had been openly opposed to Nazism, representing a clear statement by the Vatican against Nazi Germany. Fr. Muckermann had been a part of the anti-Nazi clandestine Press that published the *Der Deutsche Weg*; he was now living in exile in Rome. Fr. Ledit had been in charge of publishing (1935-1939) the periodical *Lettres de Rome sur l'Atheism Moderne*. Both figures were instrumental in helping *Radio Vaticana* transition into its next phase of development, which included a more extensive news diffusion format. With this transformation, *Radio Vaticana* assumed a more pivotal role on the global scene. The BBC for one began monitoring its programmes in 1939 as a very important source of information regarding the political attitude of the Church.¹²²

Although anti-Communist programmes were prevalent on *Radio Vaticana* early on, the anti-Nazi themes preceded them, probably because of the specific interests of those running the editing office. Many such broadcasts were created in German and after 1936 they were aired more frequently.¹²³ Even though the Catholic Church and the Third Reich had signed a Concordat in 1933, violations of the agreement began almost immediately afterward:

In the very month in which the treaty was signed, the Vatican journal *L'Osservatore Romano*¹²⁴ found it necessary to raise its voice against false interpretations of the text of the Concordat, made in favour of the State authority.¹²⁵

A few months later Pope Pius XI voiced his anxiety over the religious developments in Germany in a speech given to a pilgrimage of the German Catholic Young Men's Association:

German Catholic Youth! German-Catholic-Youth: three words and each one of them a reason for an especially hearty welcome. You feel that is so, especially at this time, in this hour which is so historic for Germany, and not merely so historic, but *so hard*. By temperament and desire We are optimistic. And so, difficult and hard as this hour undoubtedly is, We are constrained to say that great hopes are reposed in you. The future lies in the hands of God. It would be much worse if we men were able to take the future into our own hands and shape it for ourselves. We must lay up great hopes in our hearts. But, beloved sons, our hopes cannot exclude every danger. You know that We are filled with the deepest anxiety and real alarm about the youth of Germany, and entertain fears with regards to religion in Germany.¹²⁶

The first attacks against the Church in Germany were directed toward Catholic schools and newspapers. The Nazis advocated the creation of what they called "positive Christianity", a new religion with its roots firmly planted in the philosophy of Nazism

itself, as well as the first measures of discrimination against the Jews.¹²⁷ The Catholic German bishops had hoped that the new Nazi government would have taken their extended hands and worked with the Church along the same lines that had taken place in Italy and that were occurring in Spain. After all, as in Italy, the Catholic bishops had not been intrinsically contrary to the anti-Semitic laws. They only opposed the norms that prohibited marriages between Jews and Aryans because they affected Catholics of Jewish heritage.¹²⁸ The hopes of the German bishops were never realized, forcing Pope Pius XI to openly confront Nazism with the 1937 encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*, which was designed to highlight that the German government's attitude was 'contradictory to the terms of the 1933 Concordat and inimical to the Church'.¹²⁹ The encyclical denounced

The fundamental errors that are at the root of National Socialist opposition to the Church, insisting on a Christian conception of God, the recognition of the Divinity of Christ and all that that entails, the position of the Church and of the Papacy and the part they must play by divine institution in teaching men about God, Christ and the moral order, which last can be founded securely on the Christian Faith alone, and ends with words of exhortation and encouragement to Youth, to priests and the laity.¹³⁰

The Nazi government vehemently rejected the encyclical and acts of violence against Catholics in Germany increased. Article 4 of the Concordat between the Nazi government and the Roman Catholic Church read:

In its relations and correspondence with the bishops, clergy and other members of the Catholic Church in Germany, the Holy See enjoys full freedom. The same applies to the bishops and other diocesan officials in their dealings with the faithful in all matters belonging to their pastoral office.¹³¹

In reality, the supposed freedom given to the Roman Catholic clergy was never allowed. On Palm Sunday, 4 March 1937, *Mit brennender Sorge* was read from the pulpit of most Catholic churches in Germany. Retaliatory measures began immediately:

Twelve printing offices which had printed this Encyclical were closed without compensation; parish magazines and diocesan gazettes which had copied the wording of its text were banned for three months; all the copies which the police could get hold of were seized and the people who had transcribed them or even circulated it were arrested. Particularly characteristic incidents occurred in the village of Essen in Oldenburg, where seven Catholic girls, who had been taken into custody for distributing the Encyclical, were released only because of the threatening attitude of the inhabitants.¹³²

From that point, no other encyclicals were allowed to be printed in Germany during the Nazi regime and the reading and distribution of such material was closely monitored by the Gestapo with harsh punishments for those who infringed the law.

Despite the mounting tension between the Roman Catholic Church and the Nazi regime, throughout 1938 the Pontiff condemned Nazism repeatedly and his opinions were clearly expressed in the Catholic Press and on *Radio Vaticana*. When Hitler visited Italy for instance, Pope Pius XI left the city as a sign of protest against the German dictator's refusal to stop the aggressive measures against Catholics. However, for the most part the general attitude of the Vatican toward Nazism was one of caution.¹³³ An article in the *Civiltà Cattolica* in 1938 stated that

Christianity was, by its very nature, intrinsically favourable to the positive side of Nazism, namely patriotism, rejection of social-Communist internationalism as well as liberal democracy, and the emphasis on the reinvigoration of the nation in its power and greatness...and was surprised about the acts of violence against the Church, similar to those done by the Communists...it invited Nazism to use

Fascism as an example, as it was a 'movement of restoration and not destruction, a doctrine of harmonization and not opposition to Christianity.'¹³⁴

It is apparent that Pope Pius XI was attempting to set the same parameters for dialogue that had been successful with the Fascist regime, not wanting perhaps to accept or realize that German Fascism was intrinsically different from its Italian counterpart.

When Austria was annexed to Germany in 1938 the Austrian bishops published a letter of support toward the political move. The reasons for this are perplexing because the persecution of German and Jewish converts to Christianity was known. Perhaps the bishops' enthusiastic support resulted from the conservative nature of the Nazi Party. In Rome, however, the Vatican media was much more cautious. Both the *Civiltà Cattolica* and *L'Osservatore Romano* stated that the letter did not have the approval of the Holy See. It seems highly probable that the same statements would have been made on *Radio Vaticana*. The letter's initiator, Archbishop Cardinal Innitzer, was called to Rome and later wrote a statement where he retracted the letter's collective nature.¹³⁵

The Vatican message

In general, during the second half of the 1930's up to 1938, *Radio Vaticana* continued to be the voice of the Pope and also acquired this new status of information source and commentary for the Vatican. It gave ample room and promotion to any Catholic initiative happening around the world, such as the World Exhibit of the Catholic Press in 1936. Another example can be found in the following broadcast, aired in German on 5 March 1937 at 8 p.m., regarding the United States:

The American bishops give great importance to the Catholic Press to combat anti-religious propaganda. In the newspapers the problem of the Press is amply discussed. Conferences, radio propaganda transmissions and other initiatives are expected.¹³⁶

Another broadcast on 14 June 1937 was aired in Italian and is even more significant in highlighting the transition between the early, scientific function of *Radio Vaticana* and its subsequent shift toward mass audiences with its commentaries in defence of Catholicism:

In Budapest, a reunion of...the directors of Catholic newspapers around the world is taking place. They are united by a single idea: Christ and they are bonded by the struggles that are often necessary for the pursuit of their mission. It is detrimental that Catholics not appreciate in its right value the importance of the Catholic Press. They should be conscious that if the Communists would have had the same concept for their Press there would have been no revolution in Spain. Anytime a Communist movement is born in a country, the Catholic Press is suppressed. But the Catholic Press is necessary; it is the work of science and faith and the recognition of the purest ideals that it diffuses in the world. All of those who are in Budapest know that the Holy Father loves the Catholic Press and his collaborators, and this certainty fills them with noble ardour. But the Catholic Press now has a great mission: regenerate and reform the Press of the world. With technical advancements and with the developments of the politics of propaganda journalism has degenerated into professional corruption...the degradation of journalism has gotten to a threatening level...it is focused on Communist and Nazi theories. The great objective of the Catholic Press is then to give back nobility to the journalism profession and restore truth...¹³⁷

The Catholic Church was undoubtedly engaging in its own version of propaganda aimed at strengthening worldwide support for its cause in light of enemies' threats. It is not surprising that the majority of the news programmes emanating from *Radio Vaticana* that were monitored by the Fascist government between 1936 and 1937 were in Italian, Spanish, and German.

Radio Vaticana was the most immediate mass medium available to the Church to communicate important initiatives taken by Catholics around the world to spread the message of the Church. The Fourth Congress of Malines had as its main focus "Catholics

and the modern times". On 21 September 1936 at 4:30 p.m. *Radio Vaticana* offered the following commentary:

It is necessary that Catholics affirm their determination to apply Catholic directives in social organizations. It is necessary to create the collective consciousness of Catholics and spread it in the entire world. This necessity is placed upon us after the developments of the Spanish tragedy which has opened the eyes of the many who love a peaceful existence.¹³⁸

Although *Radio Vaticana*'s programming still included commentaries and narratives on the lives of the saints who were used as role models, the station's focus was shifted to the actions of Catholics in the world.¹³⁹ Even more significant than the attention given to the clergy was the exaltation of the lay contributions: on 1 February 1937 (8:00 p.m.) *Radio Vaticana* discussed the important democratic function of the *Azione Cattolica* in Czechoslovakia. A few weeks later, on 5 March 1937 (8:00 p.m., in German) one programme was devoted to discussing the conditions of Catholics living on the Polish border:

Poland is situated between two anti-Catholic states, threatened on one side by the Communist propaganda coming from the east, and it borders on the West with Germany, of very different tendencies but still very hostile to Catholicism¹⁴⁰

On 19 July 1937 (4:30 p.m., in English) *Radio Vaticana* praised the spirituality of British Catholics by stating that, 'even the British police have a Catholic organization, to which thousands of Catholics belong, and they do spiritual ceremonies every year', and on 27 July 1937 (4:30 p.m., in English) it exalted the courage of the clandestine masses celebrated in persecuted Mexico, where 'masses, religious functions and catechism are celebrated on boats in the middle of rivers or in very solitary places and in the woods.'

These examples clearly show that the Catholic Church was continuing with the same objective that had been as critical to the papacy of Benedict XV, namely the 'reconquering of the secular world',¹⁴¹ with Rome as its epicentre of faith. The same goal was also present in the programmes directed toward anti-Catholic, totalitarian regimes that were oppressing the faithful, as well as democratic countries where Catholics may have been exposed to atheist propaganda.¹⁴² The following text aired on 13 November 1936 (8:20 p.m., in German) is peculiar as it discusses dangerous factors associated with the education of the youth in the United States:

In the United States, even government authorities have realized the danger of Communist propaganda. Communism has attacked the schools and is trying to pollute the youth, distributing clandestinely books, newspapers and magazines that spread the word of Moscow. These writings incite the young to rebel, praise free love and other such things...American parents are protesting against the pollution of their young ones, but the schools call on 'academic freedom' and keep up their work without being disturbed. The danger for the United States is grave, because the future belongs to these young people who are growing up with these false ideas and when they are adults they will put in danger the nation's existence.¹⁴³

Also in November 1936 *Radio Vaticana* discussed the dangers of atheism and Communism. On 20 November at 8 p.m. it aired a broadcast in German:

In Germany Catholics are worried about the measures taken in the schools for the education of the youth. The tendency to despise religion and to liberate one from the duties imposed by faith is increasing.¹⁴⁴

During the same programme the Vatican expressed similar concerns for the Communist propaganda in Mexico:

...Communist propaganda is very active and has now extended its aim to the schools to pollute the new generation. The new recruits of the Communist party

have to swear that they don't belong to any religion, that they will not practice any religion or participate in any meeting of a religious nature.¹⁴⁵

In general in 1936 and 1937 the Vatican's main preoccupations were the Spanish Civil War and Communism, although they were inserted into a larger context aimed at addressing the problems of Catholicism in general.¹⁴⁶ The Spanish Civil War especially was treated more like an example, a symptom of the innate dangers present in the world. Although *Radio Vaticana* broadcast some programmes from Spain, the transmissions in Spanish were much more numerous because they were aimed at Latin America, as well.¹⁴⁷ This is not to say that the Catholic Church was not extremely interested in the events happening in Spain. On the contrary, along with the radio broadcasts, the Catholic Press was engaged in an active campaign of support for the actions undertaken by Fascists and Nazis alongside the Spanish nationalists. The leaders in this campaign were, of course, *L'Osservatore Romano* and *La Civiltà Cattolica*. Both expressed open support for General Franco. The Jesuit magazine in particular was adamant in stating that the fight in Spain was part of a much larger anti-Communist campaign and professed that if Communism had succeeded in Spain, it would inevitably spread to Portugal, France, Italy, North Africa and South America.¹⁴⁸ Following classic slippery slope rhetoric, *La Civiltà Cattolica* defined resistance to Communism as a 'struggle even deeper than the ancient crusades...a fight undertaken against the outbreak of new barbaric actions, the bloodiest and wildest threat against Europe and the civilized world.'¹⁴⁹

The Vatican had much to gain in its support of General Francisco Franco. Threats against the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Spain had been present as early as 1931, when Manuel Azana had replaced Niceto Alcalá Zamora as Prime

Minister. Azana blamed the Catholic Church for the lack of progress in Spain and demanded the elimination of the special privileges Catholicism had enjoyed as it was no longer Spain's official religion. When the Church criticized him for taking a laissez-faire attitude regarding the burning of religious buildings in May 1931, he replied that burning 'all the convents in Spain was not worth the life of a single Republican.' Azana helped to establish a coalition of parties on the political left on 15 January 1936, heightening the Roman Catholic Church's fears of losing even more moral and political influence in Spanish society. The new coalition was called the Popular Front and included the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Esquerra Party, and the Republican Union Party. In the 1936 elections, the Popular Front won 34.3% of the votes, while the right-wing National Front obtained 33.2% of the votes, followed by the lagging centre parties at 5.4%. Soon after its victory, the Popular Front took anti-conservative measures such as releasing left-wing prisoners, adopting agrarian reforms in favour of the proletariat and, fearing a military coup, relocating right-wing military leaders like General Franco outside Spain. Regardless of the precautionary measures the Spanish Army officers led by Emilio Mola, Francisco Franco, Juan Yague, Gonzalo Queipo de Llanoand, and Jose Snajurio caused the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War on 17 July 1937 in an attempt to overthrow the Popular Front Government.

General Francisco Franco assumed leadership of the Army of Africa,¹⁵⁰ both belligerent sides gained international support. Not surprisingly, Benito Mussolini began sending military help to the Franco's army, including 20,000 soldiers. Eventually, on 27 February 1939 Chamberlain recognized the Nationalist government of General Franco, who established a Fascist government. The same changes that were made in Italy also

happened in Spain, including those affecting the Roman Catholic Church: schools became more Catholic with the addition of mandatory religious education at all levels of education, including special provisions for universities; religious organizations were guaranteed their administrative freedom; the clergy was granted a supporting role in the army; and the Church was given financial support by the state. Other changes were made that affected cultural norms in society, such as the abolition of divorce, an affirmation that the social order was going to be anti-Marxist and based instead on Catholic social doctrine. In 1941 the agreement between the state and the Catholic Church in Spain would be the culmination of the alliance between both parties.¹⁵¹

For the Church, however, the main adversary continued to be Communism. Pope Pius XI had stated so explicitly in his 1937 encyclical entitled *Divini Redemptoris*, condemning atheist Communism as ‘a system of materialism and atheism, of destruction of human freedom, a satanic instrument of torture.’¹⁵² *Radio Vaticana* fully embraced the fight against Soviet Russia, making it the main objective of religious propaganda on the air. This was due not only to the wishes of the Vatican, but also to the strong personalities of the two Jesuits in charge of programming, Fathers Muckermann and Ledit. Almost every programme contained a segment devoted to Russia with specific details and directives for the ideological battle against Communism, such as the previously discussed admonitions regarding the younger generations.

Pope Pius XI’s Pontificate ended in 1939. Overall his papacy was an extremely significant period in Church history. He was responsible for the creation of a Vatican state along with the agreement that reinstated Catholicism as the official religion of Italy. The image of the Supreme Pontiff was designed for the first time through the mass media

and was increasingly exalted on *Radio Vaticana*. The radio station of the Pope quickly became an important player in broadcast propaganda, its domestic broadcasting competitive with others such as the BBC and Radio Moscow, reflecting the success of the Catholic Church in re-establishing a sphere of influence in the world. Pope Pius XI utilized the new technology to his advantage, creating a more personal and direct bond with the faithful everywhere, something very dear to his heart. In the long run, however, his papacy was not one of progress but of acceptance of the established authorities and accordance to them, a line of conduct that many times meant sacrificing the hopes of those who were intrinsically opposed to Fascism. As Jemolo stated:

The Pontificate of Pius XI was the darkest of the last one hundred years...He defended always the rights of the Church, the freedom of Catholics to evangelize, to organize themselves in nuclei; but he never protested against the suffering that hit other people. There was no condemnation of the treatment inflicted upon those who opposed Fascism and Nazism and for the systems employed by these regimes; there are the statements against racism for that which opposes the universality of Christianity but no denouncement to the world for the persecution of German and Austrian Jews. During the Spanish Civil War, he showed that he still believed in the intrinsic goodness of the Crusades.¹⁵³

Some may find these words too harsh, they may argue that Pope Pius XI had to negotiate and protect the existence of the Catholic Church in a very difficult political context. Ensuring the establishment of a Vatican state first and then its survival in light of escalating global tensions required perhaps the sacrifice of some moral imperatives. Even the reluctant accord with Benito Mussolini could be viewed in this light, the acceptance of a “repulsive friend” for the future welfare of the eternal Church. On the other hand, as a spiritual organization aiming to guide the souls of its followers, it could

also be argued that the Church could not afford a morally relaxed attitude toward certain historical travesties such as Nazism and the persecution of anti-Fascist Italians at home.

Regardless of varied opinions, by 1938 the Catholic Church had re-affirmed itself in the global context as an important player with extensive influence on its followers. *Radio Vaticana* had become the instrument of this newfound, mass-mediated power, reaching the periphery of the Catholic world with significant success and communicating with Roman Catholic establishments world wide. On the eve of the Second World War, the Church had some formidable adversaries but also extensive ideological influence over the masses.

Notes

¹ Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright *Radio Vaticana*, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p.4. The exact quotes of the meeting between Cardinal Gasparri and the foreign diplomats can be found in Nino Tripodi (1959). *I Patti Lateranensi e il Fascismo*. Cappelli, p.88.

²“L’Istituto Luce ebbe l’iniziativa di documentare l’avvenimento con una ripresa completa. Ma era audacia questa, allora; il cinema non aveva mai varcato le pesanti soglie della ufficialita’. E ancora piu’ difficile sembrava che il suo primo esperimento potesse compiersi per avvenimento tanto delicato che si realizzava in clima sommamente austero per la natura dell’evento stesso, per le persone che lo compivano e l’ambiente dove si svolgeva...” Alessandro Sardi (1957). *1870-1929: Il Grande Ideale, la Conciliazione*. Collana di Studi Storici da La Rivista Romana, pp. 145-161. loc. cit.

³ “Un Trattato inteso a riconoscere e...ad assicurare una vera e propria e reale sovranita’ territoriale...un Concordato poi, che volemmo fin dal principio indiscibilmente congiunto al Trattato per regolare debitamente le condizioni religiose in Italia...le critiche ci saranno; ma facilmente si divideranno in due grandi categorie: gli uni diranno che abbiamo chiesto troppo, gli altri troppo poco...Forse alcuni troveranno troppo poco di territorio, di temporale. Possiamo dire, senza entrare in particolari e precisioni intempestive, che e’ veramente poco, pochissimo, il meno possibile quello che abbiamo chiesto in questo campo e deliberatamente, dopo aver molto riflettuto, meditate e pregato...Quanto pero’ un territorio puo’ vantare il colonnato del Bernini, la cupola di Michelangelo, I tesori di scienza e di arte contenuti negli archivi e nelle biblioteche, nei musei e nelle gallerie del Vaticano, quando un territorio copre e custodisce la tomba del Principe degli Apostolo, si ha pure il diritto do affermare che non v’e’ al mondo territorio piu’ grande e piu’ prezioso”. *ibid*, p.8.

⁴ The brother of the future Pope Pius XII, Francesco Pacelli was an accomplished attorney. Pius XII appointed him with the honorary title of Marchese, meaning a nobleman of hereditary rank.

⁵ “Alle ore 12 di oggi, nella Sala dei Papi nel Palazzo Apostolico Lateranense e’ stato firmato un trattato fra la Santa Sede e l’Italia con cui viene composta la Questione Romana, nonche’ un Concordato per regolare le condizioni della Religione e della Chiesa in Italia. Erano plenipotenziari: per l’Italia, il Capo del Governo Benito Mussolini e per la Santa Sede il Cardinale Pietro Gasparri, Segretario di Stato, assistiti rispettivamente dell’on.le Alfredo Rocco, ministro Guardasigilli, dall’on.le Dino Grandi, Sottosegretario per gli Affari Esteri, e da mons. Giuseppe Pizzardo, Sostituto della Segreteria di Stato e dal Prof. Francesco Pacelli, Giureconsulto della Santa Sede”. *ibid*, p.9.

⁶ Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra fascismo e guerra: 1931-1944*. In Chiesa e Società dal Secolo IV ai nostri giorni. Studi storici in onore del p. Ilarino da Milano, II. Roma: Italia Sacra, 31, 681-727.

⁷ "La Santa Sede comunica e corrisponde liberamente con I vescovi, col clero e con tutto il mondo cattolico senza nessuna ingerenza del governo Italiano". Article 2, Concordat.

⁸ Approximately \$20,000 according to the Consumer Price Index.

⁹ "a). Il Governo Italiano provvederà subito a sue spese al collegamento della Città' del Vaticano con la stazione radioelettrica di San Paolo, ed in seguito con le nuove costruende stazioni di S. Palomba e della Cecchignetta; b) La Città' del Vaticano provvederà alla costruzione nel suo territorio di un impianto autonomo radiotelegrafico e radiotelefonico. La Città' del Vaticano e il Governo Italiano osserveranno le norme internazionali che regolano I servizi radiotelegrafici e radiotelefonici, e prenderanno tutte le disposizioni atte ad evitare che sia disturbato l'esercizio degli impianti vicini dei due Stati; c) Tale impianto sarà eseguito ad esclusiva cura dello Stato della Città' del Vaticano ed a spese del medesimo, concorrendosi dallo Stato Italiano soltanto con la somma di Lire cinquecentomila (L.500.000), da pagarsi alla Città' del Vaticano non oltre il 31 dicembre corrente anno 1929". Article 6, Lateran Treaty.

¹⁰ The future Pius XII.

¹¹ Marchese Marconi was given the honorary rank of Marchese, which means a nobleman of hereditary rank. At other times, he was also addressed as Senator, both in Italy and abroad. In the United Kingdom he was known as Marchese, while the Americans preferred to refer to him with the title of Senator. Many books have been written about the famous Italian inventor. Monteleone points out that a truly in-depth study of Marchese Marconi is not available. Nevertheless, the following are relatively good sources: Luigi Solari (1940). *Marchese Marconi nell'intimità' e nel lavoro*. Milano, O.E. Dunlop (1937). *Marchese Marconi, the man and his wireless*. New York, D. Paresce Marchese Marconi (1967). *Marchese Marconi, mio padre*. Milano.

¹² Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra fascismo e guerra: 1931-1944*. In Chiesa e Società dal Secolo IV ai nostri giorni. Studi storici in onore del p. Ilarino da Milano, II. Roma: Italia Sacra, 31, 681-727, p.683.

¹³ "Pio XI si accinse alla realizzazione della Sua Radio con la sua solita decisa risolutezza, e Marchese Marconi si prestò con dedizione ammirabile. A seguito di un'udienza pontificia (11 giugno 1929, a solo Quattro giorni dallo scambio delle ratifiche dei Patti Lateranensi), il grande inventore fu accompagnato dallo scrivente nei Giardini Vaticani per il primo sopralluogo. La modestia di Marchese Marconi impressionava ed edificava. E' proprio vero che il genio non ha bisogno di pose: sono I piccoli uomini che si pavoneggiano e si danno le arie. Qualche minuto dopo giunse sul posto il neomarchese avv. Francesco Pacelli, uno dei principali collaboratori dei Patti... I lavori d'impianto furono presto iniziati e condotti alacremente a termine". Carlo Confalonieri (1957). *Pius XI visto da vicino*. SAIE: Torino, p.147-148.

¹⁴ Marcantonio Pacelli (1989). *Quando fu creata la Stazione Radio del Vaticano*. In *Strenna dei Romanisti*, volume 50, pp. 405-416. Publishing information cannot be found.

¹⁵ As was noted earlier, Francesco Pacelli was the brother of the future Pius XII and the attorney who handled the negotiations with the Fascist government.

¹⁶ Here I am referring primarily to the correspondence between the Vatican and Guglielmo Marconi.

¹⁷ Marcantonio Pacelli (1989). *Quando fu creata la Stazione Radio del Vaticano*. In *Strenna dei Romanisti*, 50, p. 406.

¹⁸ The translation sounds very formal and pompous to keep with the exact tone of official Italian of the time.

¹⁹ "Illustrissimo Marchese,

Nel ringraziare molto la S.V. della lettera inviata in data 14 corrente, mi affretto ad esprimere i miei sentimenti di profonda e devota gratitudine per l'alto onore che Sua Santità' si è degnata conferirmi nell'affidarmi la delicata ma lusinghiera responsabilità di provvedere all'impianto radiotelegrafico e radiotelefonico per lo Stato della Città' del Vaticano.

E' mio fermo proposito rispondere alla fiducia riposta in me dalla benevolenza del Santo Padre ponendo ogni impegno affinché l'impianto risulti di pieno gradimento di Sua Santità' e risponda ai più recenti dettami della scienza e della tecnica". Ibid, p.408.

²⁰ As it was explained in Chapter two, the Lateran Agreements were composed of three parts: the Treaty ensured that Italy recognize papal sovereignty over Vatican City with all its diplomatic rights. In addition, the Italian state recognized Catholicism as the national religion. The Vatican recognized the Kingdom of

Italy as the legitimate regime of Italy and gave up any claim on the rest of Rome; the Concordat, or agreement, gave the Vatican the ability to establish specific directives with the Fascist state regarding marriage laws, education, and the appointment of Bishops; finally the Financial Convention served to compensate the Vatican for the loss of the papal territories since 1870. Italy gave the Vatican approximately ninety million dollars.

²¹ “Voglia la S.V. assicurare il Santo Padre che la stazione sara’ in ogni sua parte rispondente nel funzionamento agli accordi e alle norme internazionali che regolano I servizi radiotelegrafici per evitare che sia disturbato l’esercizio degli impianti viciniori del Regno d’Italia”. Loc. cit.

²² “Il progetto che ho l’onore di trasmettere alla S.V. insieme con la presente, da una chiara idea dell’impianto come verra’ eseguito e contiene l’ammontare del minimo costo relativo.

Stimo superfluo assicurare la S.V. che nel computo di questa spesa fu posta ogni cura perche’ risultasse la piu’ limitata possibile.

Desidero anche avvertire la S.V. che mentre il progetto allegato non contempla specificatamente l’impianto ricevente, in quanto la stazione era stata progettata e calcolata nelle spese per la sola trasmissione, ho disposto affinche’ esso comprenda, senza alcun aumento di prezzo, anche gli apparecchi di ricezione”.

Loc. cit.

²³ “Ho ricevuto ieri la sua lettera del 4 e ieri sera ho conferito con il Santo Padre il quale mi ha incaricato di rispondere: che la stazione dovra’ servire alla trasmissione di soli messaggi radiotelegrafici e radiotelefonici e non anche do musica e di canto; che nessuna Commissione e’ stata costituita dal Vaticano ne’ a Roma ne’ altrove per la costruzione di detta Stazione; che recentemente ad una grande Compagnia americana che aveva avanzato una proposta per ditto impianto, e’ stato risposto dal Vaticano che il ditto impianto e’ stato affidato dal S. Padre esclusivamente al Senatore Marchese Marconi; che il Senatore Marchese Marconi ha piena liberta’ di prendere tutte le iniziative che credera’ dela caso, anche per costituzione di comitati ed altro”. Ibid, p.407.

²⁴ It should be noted that high-ranking Church officials could also be addressed with the title of Marchese.

²⁵ “Illustre Marchese,

considerati il da farsi per l’assegnazione delle lunghezze d’onda alla stazione R.T. della Citta; del Vaticano, proporrei che la Segreteria di Stato scrivesse al Bureau International de l’Union Telegraphique di Bern ache la Citta’ del Vaticano vuole registrare e riservare le seguenti lunghezze d’onda per la stazione che ha in corso di costruzione:

5968 Kc. = 50,02 meters

15120 Kc. =19,20 meters

Ibid, p.412.

²⁶ Matteo Liberatore was a philosopher, theologian and writer born in Southern Italy in 1810. Throughout his career, he published more than forty works and over nine hundred articles in the Jesuit periodical.

²⁷ Pontificia Accademia delle Scienze.

²⁸ “Ho ripensato al progetto della stazione trasmittente. Credo che per renderla utile agli scienziati, e giustificarne cosi’ l’impianto alla Specola si potrebbe organizzare una specie di Bollettino Scientifico Radio della Specola-quindicinale-cioe’ ogni quindici giorni si spedirebbero in tutto il mondo le piu’ recenti e piu’ importanti notizie astronomiche e fisiche che potrebbero essere preventivamente raccolte dalla Specola e dalla Accademia. Si organizza una specie di Comitato di redazione, si redige il messaggio in latino per rendere universale la comprensione e affermare il latino come lingua scientifica internazionale. Mi pare sarebbe una iniziativa geniale. Se ha occasione ne parli su”. In Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright Radio Vaticana, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p.19.

²⁹ “Diletto Figlio,

E’ ormai prossimo il tempo in cui ogni cosa sara’ disposta e pronta perche’ nella Citta’ del Vaticano possa regolarmente funzionare una Stazione Radio, della quale con singolari diligenze l’illustre e diletto figlio Nostro Marchese Marconi si e’ compiaciuto personalmente curare la erezione.

Abbaimo pertanto pensato che sia opportune di provvedere alla scelta di una persona di piena Nostra fiducia che possa con la dovuta competenza e solerzia attendere alla Direzione di si’ delicato e importante servizio, e la Nostra scelta si e’ fermata su di Te’, delietto figlio Nostro, del quale Ci sono ben note le chiare doti che to rendono pienamente adatto a tale ufficio.

Pertanto con questa Nostra lettera ti nominiamo Direttore della Stazione Radio della Citta; del Vaticano, sicuri che essa sotto la tua direzione Ci sara' larga di quelle alte utilita' che ce ne ispirano il pensiero I il desiderio.

Come novello segno poi della Nostra paterna benevolenza e come auspicio dei celesti favori che su di te invociamo copiosi, t'impartiamo di cuore l'Apostolica Benedizione".

³⁰ F. Farusi and G. Bosca (1961). *La Radio Vaticana. Note Storiche*. In F. Farusi, G. Bosca, G. Gigliozzi, J. Arbois, P. Richard, *Radiotelevisione per Cristo*, Catania (*Enciclopedia cattolica dell'uomo d'oggi*. Sezione XII, Le arti cristiane, 132).

³¹ "Primo fra tutti a stimarlo era il Vicario di Cristo, Pio XI, che, gli diede continue prove di grande fiducia e che amava tenerlo Presso di se' nelle ore piu' tranquille della Sua giornata, ricevendolo alla serena clama della Sua biblioteca. Era cosi' profondamente caro al cuore del papa, che tutti noi abbiamo visto il Santo Padre commuoversi al ricordo del caro estinto, quando ne fu evocata la nobile figura in una solenne tornata dell'Accademia dei Nuovi Lincei. Nessun promio piu' ambito poteva desiderare il Padre Gianfranceschi, religioso ed uomo di scienza, che l'essere caro al cuore del Vicario di Cristo..." Agostono Gemelli (23 May 1936). *Onorazione funebre pronunciata nella Collegiata di S. Medardo in Arcevia*. In Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright *Radio Vaticana*, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p.24.

³² Sapienza means wisdom. The Sapienza University was and still remains the state university in Rome. Some of the greatest minds of Italy have taught at this prestigious institution, including among many, Umberto Eco, Guido Verucci, etc.

³³ Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright *Radio Vaticana*, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p.27.

³⁴ Ibid, p.27-28.

³⁵ "Ricordo come nelle assise internazionali di scienziati, cui attivamente partecipava, era ascoltato. Alla sua parola si dava valore di indirizzo e di ammaestramento. Io stesso ho visto piu' volte uomini insigni di scienza, come le stesso Marchese Marconi, raggrupparsi intorno al gesuita per sentire qual era il suo pensiero e raccogliere il frutto della sua indagine". Loc. cit.

³⁶ Accademia dei Lincei.

³⁷ Although the pope's exact motives for sending Gianfranceschi on the North pole expedition are not clear, one could argue that the primary reason may have been the desire of the Catholic Church to be on the forefront of scientific discovery as a means to show the intrinsic harmony between faith and science; moreover, Pius XI trusted Father Gianfranceschi and knew of the Jesuit's passion for science.

³⁸ According to the BBC, in 1926 the Italian Umberto Nobile led an expedition that flew over the North Pole in a dirigible with, among others, the famous Norwegian polar explorer Roald Amudson.

³⁹ Loc. cit.

⁴⁰ The *New York Times*, 11 February 1931, page 24.

⁴¹ Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright *Radio Vaticana*, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p. 30.

⁴² "La Radio Stazione del Vaticano e' fra le prime stazioni in Europa da cui si parli telefonicamente in duplex con la altri Stazioni europee e con Stazioni americane, canadesi, australiane. Essa puo' essere considerata come l'ultima parola in fatto di radiotecnica ad onde corte al cui sviluppo hanno recato un cosi' vasto contributo S.E il Marchese Marchese Marconi ed i suoi abili Assistenti; essa non soltanto costituira' per la Citta' del Vaticano un collegamento diretto radiotelegrafico e radiotelefonico con le regioni piu' distanti della terra, ma consentira' altresì che la voce di Sua Santita' possa essere radiodiffusa ed ascoltata in tutto il mondo". *L'Osservatore Romano*, 12 February 1931.

⁴³ "Oggi, intanto, un foltissimo gruppo di giornalisti italiani ed esteri si e' recato a visitare la nuova Stazione Radio. Essi sono stati amabilmente ricevuti da S.E. Marchese Marchese Marconi e dal Direttore della Stazione p. Gianfranceschi. Ai rappresentanti della stampa e delle principali Agenzie di ogni paese l'ing. Esposito, esecutore sotto la direzione del sen. Marchese Marconi, dell'impianto, ha fornito tutti I chiarimenti inerenti alla nuova potente e meravigliosa Stazione. Era presente anche il Marchese Solari...Compiuto il giro delle varie sale delle machine tanto il Marchese Marchese Marconi quanto p. Gianfranceschi si sono affabilmente intrattenuti con I giornalisti, le cui domande di informazioni erano come e' ovvio immaginare, senza numero... Vivissima e' l'attese in tutto il mondo per le parole inaugurali che si compiacera' pronunziare, domain, l'augusto Pontefice. Da vari paesi d'America e d'Europa sono giunti al p. Gianfranceschi dei significativi messaggi esaltanti la potenza della nuova Stazione e inneggiando

al gesto di squisita bontà del Santo Padre nel voler parlare al microfono-aneliamo al momento-dice una di queste lettere-nel quale potremo genufletterci nella nostra casa e ascoltare la parola amata del nostro Padre, il Papa." *L'Osservatore Romano*, 12 February 1931.

⁴⁴ "Trasmissione speciale dalla Città del Vaticano per l'inaugurazione della Stazione Radio". *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 12 February 1931. In Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright *Radio Vaticana*, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p.39.

⁴⁵ The original Italian text of the article is reported in full here: "I locali della nuova Stazione Radio non consentivano la presenza di molte fortunate persone per assistere alla cerimonia inaugurale: tuttavia un ristretto ma elettissimo numero di personalità ha voluto fare corona al Sommo Pontefice, pago di rimanere anche fuori dei locali della Stazione, pur di poter con la propria presenza attestare il primo tributo di riconoscenza di tutta la cattolicità al Padre Comune per il gesto così importante e grandioso che Egli avrebbe compiuto.

Sin dalle ore 15 tutte le adiacenze della Stazione Radio sono state tenute sgombre da un lodevole servizio dei Gendarmi Pontifici. Si accede per i magnifici viali dei Giardini Vaticani e si arriva in un'ampia spazzata con un'elegante giardino sottostante. Due pennoni dai colori pontifici sventolano ai lati della palazzina. All'interno già tutto è predisposto per l'inaugurazione. Gli ingegneri della compagnia Marchese Marconi e gli operatori agli ordini del p. Gianfranceschi, sono tutti al loro posto di lavoro. La Radio è in azione per le ultimissime esperienze di contatto con le altre stazioni radiotelegrafiche e radiotelefoniche del mondo: tra poco però la corrente sarà tolta per essere di nuovo azionata dalle mani stesse di Sua Santità'.

Alle 15,30 arriva il sen. Marchese Marconi con la sua gentile Consorte. L'illustre uomo si reca subito alla Sala degli amplificatori, si pone la cuffia ed inizia anch'egli le conversazioni transatlantiche: le voci giungono da New York, Melbourne, Quebec, etc., distintissime. Con il Sen. Marchese Marconi sono nella sala, e lo coadiuvano, il marchese Solari, l'ing. Mathieu, l'ing. Santamaria, l'ing. Esposito, l'ing. Isted, l'ing. Jacskon.

Padre Gianfranceschi è instancabile nell'impartire le ultime disposizioni: è di continuo assediato da domande, da quesiti di informazioni: a tutti egli risponde col suo sorriso abituale, animato oggi da profonda legittima commozione,

Al proprio posto di manovra sono l'assistente ing. Arru', il cav. Marchese capoposto, e gli operatori R.T. Villa, Marrese e Mauro..." *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14 February 1931.

⁴⁶ Here is the list of those present for the inauguration of *Radio Vaticana* as reported by *L'Osservatore Romano* on 14 February 1931: "Cardinals Granito Pignatelli of Belmonte, decano of the Holy College; Pacelli, Secretary of State; Gasparri and Ehrle; Monsignors Pizzardo, Archbishop of Nicea, Secretary of the Ecclesiastic Congregation of Extraordinary Affairs; Ottaviani, Assistant to the Secretary of State.; Pellizzo, Archbishop of Damietta, Secretary Economico of the R.da Factory of Saint Peter, Pisani, Archbishop of Costanza di Scizia; Ruffini, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Seminarians of the Università' of the Studi; the Monsignors Mariani, Mercati, Prefect of the Apostolic Vatican Library, Guidi, Morano, Krieg, Malchiodi. Also present were: Camilla Ratti, sister of His Holiness; Countess Ernestina Ratti, sister-in-law, Count Franco Ratti, the Marquis Persichetti-Ugolini, nephews of His Holiness; a few members of the Diplomatic corps, among whom the Business Agent for the United Kingdom, many members of the Roman aristocracy, among whom the Prince of Barberini with his sons Enrico and Francesco; the Knight of Gran Croce Camillo Serafini, Governor of the State of Vatican City with the General Secretary Beccari, and the Legal Consultant Angelini-Rota; Count Dalla Torre; Nogara, Director of the Pontifical Museum and Galleries, the Commendatori castelli, Belardo, De Rossi, Ciriaci, General President of the Catholic Action; the Commendatori Manzia, Costa, Seganti, Salvi, Momo, Salviucci, Milani, Director of Sanitary Services, Respighi, Director of Communications, Caiola, Office Supervisor of the Provveditorato, and marchetti, head Supervisor of the Office of Telegraphy. The Pontifical Academy of Science of the New Lincei is represented by, in addition to Father Gianfranceschi, Monsignor Morano, Professors Palazzo, Lombardi, Nobile, Lepri, and Vanni."

⁴⁷ "Non v'era finora nelle formule liturgiche un'apposita benedizione per la radio, come c'è invece per il telegrafo, per la ferrovia e per altre invenzioni moderne". *La Tribuna*, 13 February 1931. In Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright *Radio Vaticana*, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p.41.

⁴⁸ The exact Latin text of the prayer: “Domine Jesu Christe qui dixit Apostolis tuis: praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae, benedic + hanc machinarum seriem ad aetheris undas ciendas, ut apostolica verba cum longinquis etiam gentibus communicantes, in unam tecum familiam congregemur.

Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. Amen”. Loc. cit., footnote 7.

⁴⁹ “L’animazione e’ intense...Nella sala degli amplificatori il marchese Solari e l’ing. Mathieu, trasmettono al mondo, a brevi tratti, la cronaca dell’interessantissimo momento: ore 16,10, fine comunicazione con New York; ore 16,12, e’ imminente l’arrivo di Sua Santita’; ore 16,15 l’ing. Mathieu e il marchese Solari ripetono l’annuncio in francese ed in inglese; ore 16,20, squilli di tromba: ingresso di Sua Santita’.

L’Osservatore Romano, 14 February 1931.

⁵⁰ “Ho l’altissimo onore di annunciare che tra pochi istanti il Sommo Pontefice Pio XI inaugurerà la Stazione Radio della Città del Vaticano. Le onde elettriche trasposteranno in tutto il mondo attraverso gli spazi la sua parola di pace e di benedizione. Per circa venti secoli il Pontefice Romano ha fatto sentire la parola del Suo Divino Magistero nel mondo; ma questa e’ la prima volta che la Sua viva voce puo’ essere percepita simultaneamente su tutta la superficie della terra. Con l’aiuto di Dio che tante misteriose forze della natura mette a disposizione dell’umanita’, ho potuto preparare questo strumento che procurerà ai fedeli di tutto il mondo la consolazione di udire la voce del Santo Padre. Beatissimo Padre, l’opera che la Santita’ Vostra si e’ degnata di affidarmi io oggi Vi consegno: il suo compiacimento e’ oggi consacrato dalla Vostra Augusta Presenza; degnatevi, Santo Padre, di voler far sentire la Vostra Augusta parola al mondo...”. In Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright *Radio Vaticana*, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p.44.

⁵¹ “...A chi gli domandava perche’ avesse parlato in latino ed avesse usato quasi esclusivamente le parole della Scrittura, rispose che il latino era la lingua universale della Chiesa e, in quell’incontro veramente ecumenico, la parola di Dio, *Pater ed Dominus universae creaturae*, sarebbe arrivata a tutti, indiscussa e gradita”. Carlo Confalonieri (1957). *Pio XI visto da vicino*. Torino: S.A.I.E., p. 25. In *ibid*, p. 45.

⁵² “...Ci rivolgiamo pienamente a tutte le cose e a tutti gli uomini loro dicendo qui e in seguito, con le parole stesse della Sacra Scrittura: udite o cieli, quello che sto per dire, ascolti la terra la parola della mia bocca. Udite o genti tutte, tendete l’orecchio o voi tutti uniti in un medesimo intent o il ricco e il povero, udite o isole e scoltate o popoli lontani”. *L’Osservatore Romano*, 14 February 1931. For a full text of the first broadcast please see appendix VI.4.2.

⁵³ “Agli infedeli e dissidenti-Anche a voi si volge il Nostro pensiero e la Nostra parola, quanto ancora siete lontani dalla fede e dalla unita’ di Cristo. Per voi ogni giorno offriamo preghiera e sacrifici a Dio e Signore di tutti, chiedendo ardenemente che Egli con la Sua luce vi illumine e vi conduca e vi unisca alla pecorella che ascoltano la sua voce e che si faccia un solo ovile e un solo pastore”. *L’Osservatore Romano*, 14 February 1931.

⁵⁴ “Ai governanti-Ed essendo Noi debitori a tutti, diciamo primieramente a quelli che governano che comandino nella giustizia e nella carita’, ad utilita’ ed edificazione e non a rovina, ricordandosi sempre che non vi e’ potere se non da Dio e che a Dio dovranno rendere conto”. Loc.Cit.

⁵⁵ “Ai sudditi-ai sudditi poi diciamo che obbediscano ai superiori, non come ad uomini ma come a Dio, sapendo che chi resiste alla legittima autorita’ resiste alle disposizioni di Dio, e chi in tal modo resiste si prepara da se stesso la sua condanna”. Loc.Cit.

⁵⁶ Loc.cit.

⁵⁷ Following the unification of Italy in 1870, papal sovereignty was restricted to a few buildings. The Roman Catholic Church never recognized this arrangement; Pius IX and the subsequent Popes considered themselves prisoners in the Vatican. The problems involved were called the Roman Question, and they were solved by the Lateran Treaty.

⁵⁸ “L’uomo che puo’ parlare al mondo ha lanciato il Suo messaggio...Grazie al nuovo miracolo creato dal genio italiano, per la prima volta nella storia la viva voce del Vicario di Dio e’ stata fisicamente e simultaneamente udita dagli estremi confini della terra. E la voce moveva da questa Roma, che Dio ha posto al centro dell’umanita’: e il messaggio apostolico si esprimeva nella lingua cui Dio ha assegnato, per decreto che non muta, un compito universale, la lingua di Roma...L’evento pur cosi’ semplice che s’e’ compiuto nella Roma Vaticana conciliata per sempre con Roma italiana e Fascista, non segna dunque soltanto una tappa nel progresso scientifico, non e’ solo l’esponente d’un nuovo e poderoso mezzo materiale per la diffusione dell’Idea. In un’eta’ e in un mondo in cui la negazione dell’Assoluto minaccia ormai di inaridire le fonti stesse della Vita, la voce del Pontefice ha levato, ancora una volta l’appello alle Leggi che Roma custodisce: nella lingua romana, da Roma eterna, l’appello alle leggi eterne”. *La*

Tribuna, 14 February 1931. In Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright *Radio Vaticana*, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p.46.

⁵⁹ As quoted in footnote 54.

⁶⁰ “A Roma il radiomessaggio ha avuto la pu’ larga e intense diffusione. Non c’è certo apparecchio ricevente che nel pomeriggio di ieri sia rimasto inattivo. Nelle case particolari, attorno al prodigioso strumento si sono raccolti in ascolto gruppi di persone: affollatissimi sono stati anche gli esercizi muniti di apparecchi riceventi. Speciali altoparlanti sono stati posti all’esterno di molti negozi di piccole elettrici e delle redazioni dei giornali. Ovunque la folla si è assiepata fino a rendere certe località impossibili al transito. ...Sotto la Galleria Colonna la trasmissione, effettuata dall’altoparlante degli Uffici de *Il popolo di Roma*, e’ stata percepita nettamente per tutto il braccio della Galleria affollatissimo. In Via San Claudio, una vera folla si è raccolta innanzi alla ditta D’Amico la quale aveva disposto al primo piano dello stabile uno speciale altoparlante con amplificatore, che rese ottimamente le voci. Così in via IV Novembre, in via Nazionale, in piazza Vittorio Emanuele...Ovunque il messaggio del Santo padre e’ stato attentamente ascoltato...” *L’Osservatore Romano*, 14 February 1931.

⁶¹ “La metropoli italiana della radiofonia ha vissuto dalle 16,30 alle 17,30 un’ora indimenticabile. Bisogna tener conto che l’attesa per la parola del Papa, a Torino, dove hanno la loro sede centrale importanti Istituti missionari ed ecclesiastici...s’era fatto d’ora in ora febbrile, trepida, quasi affanosa. In qualche chiostro di suore, volontariamente recluse, da pochi giorni era entrato l’apparecchio del prodigio, per un’eccezione alla regola...Intorno agli apparecchi radio si raccolsero vere folle di popolani che ascoltavano con reverenza il latino del Santo Padre, anche senza intenderlo. In un locale di Bertoulla...una vecchia popolana, dopo aver ascoltato la parola di Pio XI, ad uno spiritoso che le chiedeva se avesse capito rispondeva in dialetto: *Tutto, ha ditto che bisogna volersi bene e pregare perche’ nel mondo ci sia la pace e non piu’ signori e poveri, ma tutti figli di Dio!...*” *La Gazzetta del Popolo*, 14 February 1931. In Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright *Radio Vaticana*, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p. 51,-52.

⁶² “Notizie da Clavieres assicurano che i Principi di Piemonte sono rintrati all’albergo per ascoltare il messaggio, udito nitidissimamente in tutte le alte valli. A Cormayeur quelle guide alpine si sono radunate nel loro circolo, ornato di ritratti di Pio XI, del Re, di Mussolini e hanno ascoltato, inginocchiate, la parola del pontefice scalatore di nevi”. Loc.Cit.

⁶³ “Davanti agli apparecchi radiofonici la gente faceva addirittura le code, donne, uomini, vecchi, bambini, in attitudine composta come in Chiesa. Mischiati nella folla si vedevano anche sacerdoti e prelati...Ed ecco che una voce si fa sentire, dapprima pacata e lenta, poi acquistante via via foga e calore...L’armonia del latino, la lingua liturgica, assume una nettezza ed una distinzione particolari. Anche questo e’ un miracolo, che la piu’ nobile delle lingue antiche faccia ora vibrare modernissimi congegni della macchina mirabile, creazione del genio italiano”. *La Gazzetta di Venezia*, 14 February 1931. Ibid, p. 52-53.

⁶⁴ “Alcuni, che conoscono il latino, comprendono i concetti sublime dell’allocuzione, per gli altri la parola hanno sì puo’ dore anche piu’ incanto, come un’inespressa armonia, come le preghiere e i canti della Chiesa, così suggestive per le anime semplici, che pur non afferrando la lettera ne indovinano o meglio ne sentono lo spirito vivificatore”. Ibid, p.51-52.

⁶⁵ Loc.cit.

⁶⁶ As stated in the preface the historian Fernando Bea had been commissioned by the Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo (Office of Propaganda and Development) of the Vatican to write a book on the history of Radio Vaticana. Although his book offers an interesting historical narrative of the radio stations, he refrained from commenting on any aspect, such as the one provoking this end note, which may put the Church in a less than favourable light.

⁶⁷ Frank Rosengarten (1968). *The Italian Anti-Fascist Press*. Cleveland: The Press of Western Reserve University, p. 55.

⁶⁸ *London News Agency*, 10 February 1931. BBC R47/928/1. Vatican Broadcasts (Rome), File 1, 1930-March 1933.

⁶⁹ “The following has been received by wireless from the Vatican Station during their test transmission this afternoon: The Vatican Station HVJ on 19.84 meters to be inaugurated by His Holiness the Pope. 1530G.M.T. Arrival of the Pope announced by fanfare of trumpet. The Pope will proceed to the machine room and switch on the power. He will then proceed to the transmitter room and apply the power to the transmitter. He will then operate a Telegraphic Wheatstone machine which will send a high speed morse message.

1545 G.M.T. The Pope will proceed to the amplifier room where a microphone has been installed. Marchese Marchese Marconi will speak, followed by a short address by the Pope. After visiting the remaining rooms of the wireless station the Pope will proceed to the Academy of Science, and other speakers will translate the Pope's speech into various languages. At the Academy of Science a special audience will take place at 1610 G.M.T. and the Chairman of the Academy, Marchese Marchese Marconi and His Holiness the Pope will speak in the above order. An amplifier has been fixed in the Academy connecting to the Wireless Station, so that the speeches can be relayed from there. The wavelength to be used will be 19.84 meters, 15,1520 kc/s. The programme will also be rebroadcast on 441 meters, and by all the stations of the EIAR. The United States of America will receive a rebroadcast from all stations of the NBC". BBC Internal Circulating Memo, from A.C.E. to A.D.P. Miss Benzie, 10 February, 1931. BBC R47/928/1. Vatican Broadcasts (Rome), File 1, 1930-March 1933.

⁷⁰ BBC Announcement. BBC R47/928/1. Vatican Broadcasts (Rome), File 1, 1930-March 1933.

⁷¹ The author did not have access to the BBC broadcast schedule for that day, which could be found in the back section of the Times newspaper.

⁷² *The Morning Post*, 8 February, 1931. BBC R47/928/1. Vatican Broadcasts (Rome), File 1, 1930-March 1933.

⁷³ *The Morning Post*, 9 February, 1931. BBC R47/928/1. Vatican Broadcasts (Rome), File 1, 1930-March 1933.

⁷⁴ *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 February, 1931. BBC R47/928/1. Vatican Broadcasts (Rome), File 1, 1930-March 1933.

⁷⁵ *The Universe*, 13 February 1931. In Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright Radio Vaticana, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p.53.

⁷⁶ Loc.cit.

⁷⁷ *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 1931. Loc.cit.

⁷⁸ *The Times*, 14 February 1931. Loc. cit.

⁷⁹ *The News Chronicle*, 13 February 1931. Loc.cit.

⁸⁰ *La Victoire*, 13 February, 1931. Ibid, p. 56.

⁸¹ "...Le notizie giunte al nostro giornale mostrano che il Sommo Pontefice e' stato udito in ogni parte del mondo...Solo in qualche parte d'Europa l'audizione non e' stata perfetta. Il giornale *Echo de Paris* ha avanzato la sorprendente supposizione che siano state le stazioni radio sovietiche a cercare espressamente di causare un'interferenza d'onda. Ma un tecnico spiega l'esistenza di una zona di silenzio in rapporto alle trasmissioni ad onda corta'. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 23-24 February, 1931.

⁸² "...La diffusione del discorso del Pontefice...e' stata ascoltata a Parigi dai cattolici col piu' grande interesse. Le condizioni atmosferiche tuttavia sono state pessime durante tutta la trasmissione: onde le parole del Pontefice sono state comprese con molta difficoltà'. Poiche' subito dopo le trasmissioni delle altre stazioni sono apparse chiarissime, non manca qualcuno il quale esprime l'opinione che l'emissione Vaticana sia stata disturbata a bella posta da qualche altra stazione...". *La Tribuna*, 14 February, 1931. In Fernando Bea (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: mezzo secolo della radio del papa*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana: Copyright Radio Vaticana, Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p.56-57.

⁸³ *The New York Herald*, 14 February 1931. Ibid, p.54.

⁸⁴ The article appeared on page twenty four of the *New York Times*.

⁸⁵ *The New York Times*, 11 February 1931, page 24.

⁸⁶ Loc. cit.

⁸⁷ *The New York Times*, 12 February, 1931, p. 1. The inclusion of the Ethiopian language was not cited by the *New York Times* but by *L'Osservatore Romano* of February 14, 1931. Apparently, two Ethiopian students of the Academy had gone to the radio station wanting to be included in the translation broadcast. According to the article, they were promptly accommodated.

⁸⁸ *The New York Times*, 12 February, 1931, p. 1.

⁸⁹ *The New York Times*, 13 February, 1931, p.1.

⁹⁰ *The New York Times*, 13 February, 1931, p. 14.

⁹¹ For the specific articles in this issue of the newspaper, please read: "Latin Text of Pope in Speech", p.14; "Pope's Broadcast Circles the World", p. 1; "Pope's Voice Clear on New York Radios", p.14; "150 Stations Carry Programme to Nation", p. 15 and "Pope Pius XI Addresses and Blesses the World in His First Radio Broadcast", p. 14.

⁹² *The New York Times*, 14 February, 1931, p. 21.

⁹³ *The New York Times*, 17 February 1931, p.3.

⁹⁴ *The New York Times*, 15 February 1931, p. 34.

⁹⁵ Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In “ Chiesa e Società dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano”. Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p. 681-727.

⁹⁶ Monticone reports that the news periodical was published as a part of the Atti Lincei of the Academy. It had 41 monthly issues between 19 April, 1931 and 30 January 1936. On July 1934 however, the premature death of Father Gianfranceschi slowed down the publication to five issues in 1935 and one in 1936. Monticone also comments that this collection is extremely rare and published only on E.D. Rovasenda, *Commemorazione*, 13.

⁹⁷ “Se la prima infatti fu l’inaugurazione sacra alla fede, questa seconda e’ stata l’inaugurazione sacra alla scienza. Allora fu trasmessa la parola apostolica della fede, ora e’ stata trasmessa la parola della scienza”. In Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In “ Chiesa e Società dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano”. Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p. 684.

⁹⁸ “Noi non facciamo ne’ faremo radiodiffusioni. Abbiamo pero’ ore fisse di ‘esercitazioni radiofoniche’...in queste esercitazioni diamo informazioni e notizie e leggiamo lettere dalle missioni...La domenica e gli altri giorni festive venivano effettuate letture liturgiche e spirituali dirette specialmente ai malati”. Loc. cit. p. 685.

⁹⁹ In Latin, it means the *Agency of Faith*, the Vatican’s news agency.

¹⁰⁰ Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In “ Chiesa e Società dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano”. Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p. 685.

¹⁰¹ “The Roman Catholic Church began its work in China in 1288, when Catholic missionaries were welcomed by the Emperor and granted lands and funds for the construction of edifices...Catholic activity was renewed in China in 1553, and a steady march was begun toward the acquisition of enormous holdings throughout the Empire”. N.J. Padelford. *Alien Religious Property in China*. In *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 26, No.2, (Apr. 1932), pp.296-314. For more recent data, 19th century Catholic missionaries, competing with Protestant missionaries, converted some rural communities (rural Catholics constituted 80 percent of the Chinese Catholic community). For an interesting study of Chinese Catholics, please see R. Madsen (1998), *China’s Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society*. University of California Press.

¹⁰² “...Condannare quella tendenza monopolizzatrice del fascismo, e l’ideologia che l’ispirava, non significava affatto condannare il partito e il regime come tale. Egli ricordava ancora una volta le benemeritenze del regime verso la religione, e soprattutto i vantaggi che dall’accordo con la Santa Sede esso aveva e avrebbe ancora tratto”. In Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Società Contemporanea*. Roma-Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa., p. 102.

¹⁰³ Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p.103.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p.104.

¹⁰⁶ Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁷ Alcide De Gasperi was condemned and then exonerated. In 1929, he began working for the Vatican Library. Ibid, p.105.

¹⁰⁸ “...di ristabilire, in netta contrapposizione alla cultura e alla civiltà moderna, una civiltà unitaria e Cristiana com’era quella del medioevo...ma tuttavia aperto ai contributi della scienza...Lo scopo concreto era quello di formare sulla base di questi principi una nuova classe dirigente cattolica...da questo momento più intense, più incisive ed efficaci si sviluppa la battaglia degli uomini della Cattolica per improntare interamente il fascismo dei connotati cattolici, per assimilarlo; e in particolare per conquistare una posizione preminente nel modo culturale italiano, per inserire i propri laureati nei quadri della scuola e delle facoltà universitarie statali”. Ibid, p. 108.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p.110.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 113.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p.114.

¹¹² Ibid, p. 115.

¹¹³ The reader may remember a similar attitude by the Church toward radio.

¹¹⁴ *Vigilanti Cura*, 1936. Loc. cit.

¹¹⁵ Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In “Chiesa e Società dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano”. Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p. 687.

¹¹⁶ The Council of Ephesus in 431: the heresies of the Nestorians were condemned and defeated.

¹¹⁷ Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In “Chiesa e Società dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano”. Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p. 687

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 689.

¹¹⁹ The file is cited by Monticone but can be found at the National Archive in Rome, ACS, *Ministero Interno*, PS, 1903-1949, Categoria H 5, b.13, *Radio Vaticana*.

¹²⁰ “Egli vi e’ definito creatura del generale p. Ledochowski e di sentimenti contrary al regime, odio acerrimo contro la Germania nazista ed il suo capo”. Loc. cit.

¹²¹ Loc. cit.

¹²² This was very fortunate, since *Radio Vaticana* lacks an archive of its own programming before 1952. The only sources of information regarding HVJ’s programming come from the monitoring by the Italian Fascist government and by the British Broadcasting Corporation during the Second World War.

¹²³ Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In “Chiesa e Società dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano”. Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p.691.

¹²⁴ *L’Osservatore Romano*, 26 and 27 July, 1933. In *The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich* (1942). London: The Catholic Book Club, p. 1.

¹²⁵ loc. cit.

¹²⁶ ibid, p.2.

¹²⁷ Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Società Contemporanea*. Roma-Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa., p.124.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 128-129.

¹²⁹ *The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich* (1942). London: The Catholic Book Club, p.7.

¹³⁰ loc. cit.

¹³¹ ibid, p. 59.

¹³² loc.cit.

¹³³ Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Società Contemporanea*. Roma-Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa., p.129.

¹³⁴ “Il Cristianesimo e’ per propria natura favorevole alla parte positive del movimento nazista (amor di patria contro l’internazionalismo social-comunista, principio di autorità contro il liberalismo democratico, rin vigorimento della nazione per la sua potenza e grandezza), dichiarando il suo stupore per le violenze contro la Chiesa, analoghe a quelle dei comunisti, e invitando il nazismo ancora a prendere esempio dal fascismo, ‘movimento di restaurazione e non di distruzione...dottrina di armonizzamento e non di opposizione al cristianesimo”. *Civiltà Cattolica*, 2 April, 1938. Ibid, p.131.

¹³⁵ Ibid, p.130.

¹³⁶ ACS, *Min. Int.*, PS 1903-49, b.13. In Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In “Chiesa e Società dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano”. Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p. 693.

¹³⁷ “A Budapest si svolge la riunione straordinaria degli uomini di intelligenza, cioè a dire dei direttori dei giornali cattolici del mondo. Essi sono tutti uniti da una sola idea: Cristo, e accomunati dalle spesse lotte che e’ necessario superare e dalle difficoltà frapposte alla loro opera. E’ male che i cattolici non apprezzino nel suo giusto valore l’importanza della stampa cattolica. Essi dovrebbero rendersi conto che se i comunisti avessero avuto ed avessero lo stesso concetto della loro stampa, non ci sarebbe stata la rivoluzione in Spagna. Inoltre ogni volta che si delinea un movimento a tendenze comuniste in qualche paese vengono soppressi i giornali cattolici. La stampa cattolica e’ necessaria, e’ il lavoro di scienza, di fede, e di riconoscenza che diffonde nel mondo gli ideali piu’ alti e piu’ puri. Tutti coloro che sono riuniti a Budapest sanno che il Santo Padre ama la stampa cattolica ed i suoi collaboratori, e questa certezza li anima di nobile ardore. Ma la stampa cattolica ha ora una grande missione: rigenerare e riformare tutta la stampa

mondiale. Con I progressi tecnici e con gli sviluppi della politica propagandistica, il giornalismo in genere e' degenerate in una deplorevolissima corruzione professionale. In tal modo la degradazione del giornalismo e' giunta ad un punto di minaccia. Essa e' provocata dall'asservimento alla finanza e all'industria ed e' imperniata su di un egoismo cieco mascherato dalle teorie del comunismo e del nazismo. Il grande compito della stampa cattolica e' quindi quello di redimere la verita' e ridare la nobilta' alla professione giornalistica". Ibid, p. 693-694.

¹³⁸ "E' necessatio che i Cattolici affermino la loro volonta' di applicare le direttive cattoliche nelle organizzazioni sociali. E' necessario formare la coscienza collettiva dei cattolici e diffonderla nel modo intero. Questa necessita' si impone dopo lo sviluppo della tragedia spagnola cha ha fatto aprire gli occhi a troppi amanti della vita tranquilla". ACS, *Min. Int.*, PS 1920-1945. Ibid, p. 694.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 695.

¹⁴⁰ "La Polonia si trova fra due Stati anticattolici, minacciata da una parte dalla propaganda comunista che viene dall'Oriente, e confina all'Occidente con la Germania, di tendenze ben diverse, ma sempre ostile al cattolicesimo". Loc. cit.

¹⁴¹ Loc. cit.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 696.

¹⁴³ Loc. cit.

¹⁴⁴ Loc. cit.

¹⁴⁵ Loc. cit.

¹⁴⁶ Loc. cit.

¹⁴⁷ Loc. cit.

¹⁴⁸ Guido Verucci (1999). *La Chiesa nella Societa' Contemporanea*. Roma-Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa., p 139.

¹⁴⁹ "Una lotta piu' profonda ancora delle antiche crociate...una lotta ingaggiata contro l'irrompere di una nuova barbaria, la piu' selvaggia e sanguinaria che minacci l'Europa e il mondo civile". Loc. cit. p. 139.

¹⁵⁰ The Army of Africa was composed of the Spanish Army units based in Morocco, regular Spanish units and the Spanish Foreign Legion.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p. 141.

¹⁵² Loc. cit.

¹⁵³ "Quello di Pio XI fu il pontificato piu' grigio degli ultimi cent'anni...Difese sempre I diritti della Chiesa, la liberta' dei Cattolici di predicare, di stringersi nelle file delle loro organizzazioni; ma non protesto' contro le sofferenze che non colpissero il suo gregge. Non si trova una sua protesta per il rattamento inflitto agli avversari del nazismo e del fascismo, per i sistemi di questi regimi; ci sono le prese di posizione contro il razzismo per cio' che contrasts all'universalismo cristiano, non la denuncia al mondo della persecuzione degli ebrei tedeschi ed austriaci. Nella Guerra civile di Spagan mostro' di credere ancora alla bonta' delle crociate". A. C. Jemolo, (1977). *Chiesa e Stao in Italia dalla Unificazione ai Giorni Nostri*. Torino, p.265. Ibid, p. 151.

CHAPTER FIVE

RADIO VATICANA AND THE THIRD POWER

“There is in Italy, a third power, don’t forget it. Why be surprised if our confidential letters are broadcast to the world just a few days after they have been received?”

A. Hitler

With the invasion of Ethiopia and Italy’s joining the battle of France in 1940, Italian domestic radio programming intensified and shifted from its initial experimental phase, creating, at least initially, an apparently even more glorious face, so to speak, of Italian Fascism’s international conquests. Arguably, the Catholic Church indirectly contributed to the propaganda. The phenomena that characterized this phase of Italian/Vatican broadcasting were a series of apparently contradictory attitudes; on one side, the blatant propaganda of EIAR,¹ aided and intensified by the religious “conversations” of Father Facchinetti; on the other, *Radio Vaticana*’s denouncing of Nazi Germany’s religious persecutions; this was compounded by, finally, the officially apparent neutral position of the Church manifested semi-consistently through the contents of *L’Osservatore Romano*, and the newfound yet precarious harmony between Italy and the Vatican through the Lateran Accords, which were by now almost a decade old. In addition to these attitudes, a careful look at the communication between the Vatican and the belligerent powers showed an even more complex layering of official versus unofficial alliances.²

Italian broadcasting

Italian domestic broadcasting was once again restructured. From a legislative standpoint very little changed; structurally, however, from the beginning of the 1930’s,

SPECIAL NOTE

**ITEM SCANNED AS SUPPLIED
PAGINATION IS AS SEEN**

Mussolini completed his own metamorphosis of radio by turning the internal structure as well as the programming of EIAR into an exclusive “war tool”. A significant part of his broadcasting propaganda programme was the broadcasts to North Africa and the Mediterranean Basin. Mussolini was eager to affirm the presence of the “voice of Rome”³ throughout the world. Radio programmes depicting the glory of Fascist Imperialism originated primarily from the short-wave stations in *Bari*, *Trieste*, and *Prato Smeraldo*. The historian Franco Monteleone reported that to simplify the bureaucratic apparatus of media control, the Ministry of Internal Affairs had authorized *Bari*’s prefecture to use the correspondence of a *Stefani*⁴ journalist.⁵ In May 1934, *Radio Bari* began broadcasting to the Arab world,⁶ initially with three programmes a week and moving to daily broadcasts in 1935 to Italian colonized Libya but also to British and French areas such as Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine and the Red Sea region.⁷ Typical Fascist propaganda themes were present, primarily the exaltation of Imperial Italy based on an extension of the old Roman Empire. The programmes also contained progressively more violent attacks against Britain, which was portrayed as an aggressor that would not, unlike Italy, protect Islam. Following the German example of its *Volksempfänger*,⁸ Italy provided a vast number of cheap or free radio sets to the Arab customers, designed to be tuned only to the frequency of *Radio Bari*. Although illiteracy rates were high in the Middle East, the use of radio was spreading: by 1935, Palestine alone boasted over 10,000 license holders. Radios were especially popular with Arab café’ owners who installed them for the entertainment of their customers.⁹ Interestingly, it is clear that the efforts of the Fascists to destabilize British rule were so strong to compel them to provide free radios to the Arabs but not to the Italian people.

In 1940 the Inspectorate was reorganized in three main sections: one for internal affairs, one for foreign affairs, and one section devoted to jamming anti-Fascist broadcasts.¹⁰ The programming, starting after the surrender of France on 23 June 1940 was, despite some opposition within the Fascist party, reduced to broadcasting almost exclusively war information and commentaries, as well as domestic and foreign propaganda. Only rarely some form of entertainment, mainly music was interspersed to maintain a sense of normality, showing that Mussolini was still calmly in control of the situation.¹¹ As the war progressed, propaganda intensified. It became increasingly difficult and embarrassing for EIAR commentators to deal with the ever-growing number of Italian defeats at sea, in Greece and in North Africa. Such events were ignored until an extended period of time had passed, making it more plausible to find cautious justifications for Italy's defeats. This ineffective propaganda was countered by the accurate and powerful BBC's short-wave anti-Fascist propaganda available to Italian listeners: radios produced in the 1930's often carried short-wave bands. Although one could assume Mussolini would order jamming against the BBC's programming, no evidence was found to indicate that this was done despite the fact that there was a department for jamming. Paradoxically and, in a sense, ironically, even though Italians became increasingly distrustful of EIAR propaganda, between 1940 and 1943 subscriptions to radio grew from approximately one million to one million and a half out of a population of approximately forty-five millions.¹² This did not mean that the population was listening exclusively to EIAR. *Radio Vaticana* had many followers, as did many clandestine stations; in fact eventually Italians with short-wave radios,

distrusting Fascist “radio news” and newspapers, at great personal risk, tuned their receivers overwhelmingly to the BBC.¹³

Propaganda programming had already been implemented during the African invasions and the Spanish Civil War. Mussolini’s’ adventure in Ethiopia and invasion of British Somaliland represented the only unaided Italian victory during the war; the Fascist dictator saw it as the continuation of the Imperialist expansion undertaken by the House of Savoy with the 1907 conquest of Libya as well as the great Caesar of Rome of which he saw himself as the most recent incarnation. Mussolini was keen on taking aggressive steps toward ensuring that Italy have its colonies in East Africa, competing with Great Britain and France. Although the League of Nation had condemned Italy for ignoring the League’s’ covenant and had imposed economic sanctions against the country, failure to enforce those sanctions was a significant factor in Italy’s’ victory. By conquering Ethiopia, Mussolini could claim Fascist glory and gain revenge for the loss of its colony in the 1896 Battle of Adua.

To counter Communist propaganda, EIAR established *Radio Verdad*,¹⁴ which was the experimental ground for many strategies that would later be adopted during the war. Mussolini wanted to present himself as the ‘saviour of European equilibrium,’¹⁵ acting as the mediator between Germany and the Franco-British bloc during the signing of the Munich Pact in 1938 and surrender of the Czech Sudetenland to Germany. In reality, Mussolini was preparing the nation for war.¹⁶

Most of the wartime programmes discussed the glory of Italy, of the regime, and of the soldiers who fought for the noble cause of Fascism. It is worth looking at some examples of propaganda on the airwaves, which mirrored the content of the Fascist Press.

The following programme highlighted the valour of the soldier, in this case the wounded soldier, while discrediting the information emanating from *Radio Londra*,¹⁷ operated by the BBC's Propaganda Warfare Organization, the *Special Operations Executive*.¹⁸ The mentioning of enemy propaganda shows clearly the alarm it generated among Fascist authorities in 1941:

When radio and newspapers speak of you (the soldiers), they call you the 'glorious wounded'. These are not just words. Italians put their entire souls in these words. You are ours, just like you are your families; it is as if we knew you personally, even if we have never seen you, and when we call you glorious it is not rhetoric... 'glorious' means something profound and intimate; you are glorious because you are simple, you have fought like good soldiers, and in your young flesh you have felt, in an instant, a hard blow, and then your blood spilled. That which mothers and fathers call my blood.¹⁹

Palmieri went on to discredit British propaganda, calling it shameful because it insulted the valour of the soldier:

British propaganda is absurd because it is filled with lies; but what is even worse is that it is the vilest, filled with a moral misery that cannot be justified by any reason, by the state, by strategy, or by manipulation; it is nothing more than shameful and useless mud. Because the liars employed by the British-Judaic propaganda have dared to offend our people from whom you have come, the fighters and the fallen. They have dared to think, with cowardly and idiotic evil, that this honest people... could negate, for a few extra sacrifices and war hardships, all of their life, honour, and faith.²⁰

Although the Fascist government had passed the Racial Laws against the Jews in 1938,²¹ public opinion believed that Mussolini had reluctantly caved in to pressures from Hitler; Italians were not anti-Semitic; Jewish people had been, up to that point, completely and successfully acculturated into Italian society. This 1941 broadcast clearly shows instead

Mussolini's desire to please his German ally: anti-Semitic messages became a frequent part of the Fascist propaganda. Eventually the situation for the Jews living in Italy ended with the 1943 overthrow of Mussolini and Hitler's invasion of central and northern Italy; Italian Jews were rounded up²² by SS military units and deported to Auschwitz.

Among many other statements of patriotism and valour, Palmieri concluded by affirming that the Italian people were resilient and courageous, rendering impossible that they would ever abandon their much-loved leader:

As if the Italian people were not made of willpower, work, sacrifice, thirst for beauty, truth, justice; as if Italians, tightly around their leader always, were not people capable of saying 'before anyone could touch even one finger of our Leader, who is all our youth and pride, they will have to get through us.'²³

The same rhetoric of patriotism, valour, and courage was present throughout the entire war period.

As the conflict intensified, so did the propaganda efforts of Italy's enemies. It was mentioned before that the Italian people were willing to take the high risks that came with listening to foreign stations. Especially at night, it was easier to pick up long-wave signals coming from most major European radio stations and even from smaller ones such as the Swiss *Radio Monte Ceneri*, which was managed by an Italian socialist.²⁴ The clandestine Communist party in Italy had exhorted its members to listen to the forbidden stations and had taught them that it was possible to bypass police control by asking radio vendors if they could try out the radio for the standard two-week period.²⁵ An entertaining case is that of *Radio Mosca Komintern*, which transmitted on a medium wavelength very close to that of *Radio Milano*, making it easy for listeners to pick it up

even by mistake. The *Radiocorriere* published the programming schedule for the Russian-based station for a long time before Fascist authorities realized the mistake.²⁶

Perhaps the most significant and memorable propaganda effort was designed by the BBC. Under the guidance of Colonel Harold Stevens, ex-agent of the British Intelligence Service, *Radio Londra* brought together a group of anti-Fascists who had escaped Italy. The radio station started broadcasting to Italy on 27 September 1938. With the start of the war in 1939 the programmes increased from fifteen minutes a day to one hour and half in 1940 and a maximum of 4 hours and fifteen minutes daily by 1943. The station became very successful in Italy. British propaganda was very different from its Italian counterpart: the style was linear and direct, with none of the frills of Fascist propaganda, which included an exalted tone of voice and extremely wordy rhetoric. The main propaganda themes of *Radio Londra* included very careful messages against the Fascist regime. The journalist Silvana Silvestri wrote that the British station repeated to the Italian people that all Fascist leaders (except for Mussolini) were slaves to the Germans and that they had become very wealthy with the war at the expenses of the working class; that the Fascist regime had brought the country to bankruptcy. *Radio Londra* avoided comments that would discredit the Monarchy, emphasized Mussolini's affairs with various women, and frequently commented on the absurdity of comparing the Italian Empire with the British Empire. Radio Londra may have wanted to emphasize Mussolini's notorious love affairs to show his hypocrisy; on one side, he pretended to be a moral man, one who believed in the importance of family, one who had accepted Catholicism, with all its moral imperatives, as the official religion of the country; on the other, he was a liar and a libertine. Finally, the programmes took time to define the true

meaning of freedom as the ability to freely express opinions, a free Press, and freedom of assembly.²⁷

The half-hour programme became a staple of all hopeful anti-Fascist Italians during the war years. Ironically, Italian propaganda efforts to highlight the mistakes made by *Radio Londra* only served to make the station more popular. Listening to the forbidden station became part of the Italian anti-Fascist secret collective experience and a sign of defiance against Fascism executed even for those who had not expressed opposition to the regime in any other way.²⁸ After the Allied conquest of the South of Italy, in 1943, the British-controlled *Radio Bari* became the first anti-Fascist national radio station on the peninsula and a haven for intellectuals coming from every part of the country. The “*cento di Bari*” (the one hundred of Bari) worked under the supervision of Major Jan Greenless in the now famous programme *Italia Combatte*.²⁹

Fascist international propaganda

Starting in 1933 and continuing until the collapse of the Italian Fascist state, EIAR Foreign Service was put in charge of the Italian-American Giorgio Nelson Page who, as Isola points out, had “renounced his American citizenship in favour of the Fascist faith.”³⁰ A network of radio stations was put into operation, aiming their propaganda to the Mediterranean basin via *Radio Bari*³¹ as well as to America and Russia in 1938.³² Italian historian Gianni Isola reports that the Italian Propaganda Ministry created a clandestine radio broadcasting station to set confusion in Russia. Broadcasting in Russian, the speakers claimed that Fascism was the true heir of Socialism, while Bolshevik Communism was an imposter, a corruptor of the masses who should revolt against Stalin. Isola goes on to narrate that Jezov, the head of the NKDV, the Russian

secret police, almost was killed for not having been able to identify the source of the station. The station stopped operating in 1939 with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which made Nazi Germany and Russia allies for the invasion of Poland and the beginning of the Second World War.

Part of the propaganda against Russia was devised in the *Centro Studi Anticomunisti*³³ where Dr. Tommaso Napolitano³⁴ came up with the idea of creating a bogus Communist party to counter Bolshevism. Napolitano was a young magistrate and a faithful member of the Fascist Party. An expert in Russian society, he had written over one hundred and forty articles about Russia in various Fascist publications such as *Critica Fascista* and *Il Lavoro Fascista*. After discarding a suggestion from Nelson Page to form an imaginary Trotskyist party, he thought it best to base his idea on the *Sojuz Osvobozdenija*,³⁵ the party that had suffered anti-czarist opposition before the Russian revolution of 1905. In Napolitano's own words,

...The imaginary party...has the following objectives: reunite the scattered and confused members of the Russian opposition and incite them to get actively organized (as it seems to be happening at the moment); criticize violently Stalin's domestic and foreign policy; demonstrate in practice the ideological failure of Bolshevism and the scarcity of the materialization of its social objectives; penetrate Fascist doctrine into the USSR, centring the revolutionary programme of the *Sojuz Osvobozdenija* around the fundamental ideas of our revolution.³⁶

The following programme shows the above-mentioned principles in action. It was created by Manlio Barberino, Napolitano's closest associate. During the broadcast, the Italian propagandist accused the Soviet regime of supporting the "Jewish conspiracy"³⁷ at the expenses of the peasant and working classes. It was broadcast on 4 August 1938, only one month before racial laws were instituted:

Let us look at the history of Communism. The biggest class in Russia was the peasant class, the greater worker the peasant...what has Communism done for the Russian peasant? It has instigated him against the land owners, against the intelligence because it was difficult to attack the educated class. Then it divided them and instigated them against each other...while the Russians were destroying each other the Communists organized, with the help of their Jewish leaders the apparatus of power that has imprisoned the entire population. Now only the idiots do not see that 'the power of the worker and of the peasant' is a joke, a derision. The power, in reality, is international with Jewish leaders and the people have been transformed in cattle for work...³⁸

The fervent attack against the Jews was clearly a precursor of Mussolini's anti-Semitic campaign.

International Fascist programming began early on, in 1930 to be specific, when Marchese Marconi created the first short-wave antenna in Rome. The EIAR short-wave station *Prato Smeraldo* began such broadcasts, although it was not until a few years later that the full spectrum of Fascist propaganda was deliberately aimed at the United States. One successful example of propaganda directed to North America came through the words of the journalist Luigi Villari. In 1941, speaking from *Prato Smeraldo* as one of the top propagandists³⁹ for English-speaking countries, Villari tried to implant a wedge of doubt in American minds regarding their country's imminent entry into war to support England:

It seems to have become an axiom in America that the United States must help England in every way possible in this war...whoever doubts this axiom is considered almost a heretic...the answer comes to us by an American writer, Quincy Howe, in a volume published four years ago but not at all passé by the title *England expects every American to do his duty*...He states that it is not the strength of Great Britain which constitutes a danger for the United States but its

weakness, and he points out the many symptoms of decadence of the British Empire which, for the last twenty years, has been sending SOS messages to the United States to save it from disintegration...⁴⁰

Villari's propaganda was certainly more sophisticated than that of some of his colleagues because it was based on intelligent literary observations and a strong oratory style. Unlike trite and predictable references to the glory of the Roman Empire, the valour of the Fascist soldier or even the semi-divine glorification of Mussolini by Father Facchinetti, Villari used current events as evidence for his rhetorical arguments. Later in the programme he discussed the detrimental effect the friendship between the United States and England had on American citizens:

The cooperation between the American radio organizations and the British Broadcasting Corporation is equally significant. On 25 March 1937 the National Broadcasting Corporation of America devoted an hour to the theme: 'Is a global adjustment possible?' The orators were the British Lord Elton who said that while the League of Nations should maintain peace in Europe, Great Britain and the United States should maintain it in the world...everyone agreed that American isolationism was folly, and that the first duty of the American citizen was to sacrifice his life for the British empire.⁴¹

Finally Villari tried to create a link between the political philosophy of the Axis and that of the United States. An "autocratic America" was his suggestion, based on continental rather than global politics. By not devoting so much attention to the United Kingdom, America would allow other countries to shine and would create fertile ground for the emergence of "global and cooperative community". If this were to occur, the United States leadership would discover that,

The ideas of Quincy Howe for an American continental policy are not at all in contrast with the political attitude of the Axis of a continental European community. If the American people actually reflected on Howe's idea and acted

on its basis there could truly be the possibility of cooperation between the two concepts for a common cause, that is, justice. Unfortunately this is not the objective of the belligerents in America or in England which are in a state of hysterical ferocity trying constantly to devour new victims.⁴²

God and country

A review of Italian Fascist wartime propaganda would not be complete without a look into the use of religious elements to strengthen support from the people. Along with the by now familiar themes employed by the regime's radio commentators, another approach was added: war was transformed into 'an ideological crusade against Bolsheviks, atheists, and those who denied the Gospel...Fascist propaganda forgets perhaps the controversies against pagan Nazism which had been looked upon with suspicion since its very inception by the ecclesiastic authorities.'⁴³ In the following passage, Fulvio Palmieri expressed this exact concept, creating the image of a country unified and supported in its struggle by its faith. These types of programmes were, as will be shown later, in direct contrast with the anti-Axis affirmations made on *Radio Vaticana* by many Jesuits, highlighting even more flagrantly the complex web of contradictions the Italian people were exposed to on a daily basis:

This soldier has defended and defends, with action, the faith of his fathers and of his land. He left for the war, silent and active crusader, with an unadorned uniform and his soul truly close to God. It is impossible to alter this truth like it is impossible to mistake the word of the Gospel.⁴⁴

Palmieri went on to state that the Italian soldier was a moral soldier fighting a moral, just war against the godless evils of his country's enemies:

In the face of the fury of the Russians, negators of Christ, of the cold materialistic mania of the Americans and of the British, the only forces stopping them are the chests of the soldiers. And with all the soldiers, in the very front line, are the

chests of the Italian soldiers. To these chests is entrusted the defence and the survival of the Nation and therefore of religious faith itself. For this reason, war chaplains, Your (sic) cross is raised in war as a sign of love and encouragement...to God is offered this example simple and great, it is offered to the heart and to the destiny of the Nation.⁴⁵

The Catholic Church did not comment on these types of broadcasts just like it chose not to remark on Father Facchinetti's statements. As expected, the Church chose an official position of neutrality that was anything but simple or direct. *L'Osservatore Romano*, as expected, fell in line with the Vatican, the real interesting ideological battle between the Catholic Church and the Axis occurred on the airwaves of *Radio Vaticana*. Given the amount of controversy surrounding this issue, some may be surprised to learn that the Jesuit-run radio station worked in close proximity with Pope Pius XII in denouncing the abuses of Nazism. Acts of heroism were there and the evidence supports them, although the radio silence imposed by the Pope in the spring of 1941 leaves open the question of moral responsibility versus survival. It becomes apparent that this is an issue which cannot be oversimplified by either opinion; the answers lie in understanding fully the Catholic Church's precarious position during the world conflict and the decisions made by the enigmatic Pope Pius XII at the time.

The Catholic Church and Radio Vaticana during the war

On 10 February 1939 Pius XI died of cardiac arrest.⁴⁶ At the time of his death the Pope was getting ready to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Lateran Accords and the eighth anniversary of his pontificate; however, given the grave conditions in Europe, he had called an assembly of all the Bishops in Rome for 11 and 12 February 1939. It was expected that he would deliver a speech he had worked on extensively, one that would denounce the breaches of the Lateran Accords by the Italian government and the racial

persecutions in Germany as well as that country's belligerent attitude. Because of his untimely death, the speech was never heard and excerpts from it would not be published until 1959 by Pope John XXIII.⁴⁷

The conclave that began on the evening of 1 March 1939 would turn out to be the shortest in the history of the Church. The reasons for such brevity are logically tied to the imminent outbreak of war in Europe. The next day, 2 March 1939, on his sixty-third birthday, the ex-Secretary of State Cardinal Pacelli was selected as the new Pope.⁴⁸ Eugenio Pacelli was born in Rome on 2 March 1876 from an aristocratic family that was not unfamiliar with Church hierarchy. He obtained a degree in theology from the Gregoriana University in Rome and was ordained priest when he was twenty-three. Before becoming Pope, he served the Church as a diplomat, acting as the Papal Nuncio in Bavaria (1917) and later in Prussia (1920). In 1929 he was appointed cardinal and in 1930 he became Cardinal Secretary of State. Pacelli fine-tuned his diplomatic skills by travelling throughout Europe and the United States and by negotiating various concordats with Austria and Germany. In light of Europe's political situation, his diplomatic abilities made him the perfect choice to succeed Pius XI.

By choosing the name of Pius XII, the newly elected Pope seemed to be making a strong statement of continuity with the objectives of Pope Pius XI. There may have even been internal pressure to do so, in a moment of such precarious instability, to reassure the Italian government and the world at large that the Catholic Church would continue to be consistent with the political principles that had sustained it in the last sixteen years. However, although Pius XII obviously shared his predecessor's desire to ensure continued advancement of the Church's sphere of interest and its survival in a world

conflict, his methods differed from the political attitude of Pius XI, stressing an apparent neutrality policy rather than one of more direct condemnation. After a careful analysis of the Pope's public and private diplomatic interactions, his politics appear much more layered, sophisticated perhaps, and certainly not as cut-and-dry as certain modern interpretations would have us believe. Those who support him, such as the Jesuit Pierre Blet in his book, *Pius XII and the Second World War*, describe him as 'far more energetic in work for peace'; His critics, led by John Cornwell in his book, *Hitler's Pope*, depict him as an anti-Semitic narcissist, 'the most dangerous churchman in history'.⁴⁹

The day after his election, on 3 March 1939, the new Pope went on the air for the first time to broadcast an exhortation for peace in light of the escalating hostilities. It was only six months before war in Europe would be declared and the Holy See wanted to make the best use of all mass media available to condemn the approaching war. Although Pius XI was the first Pope to be heard on the airwaves, it was Pius XII that truly became the first Pope to actively exploit the mass media. The reasons are many: *Radio Vaticana* was now out of its initial experimental phase; the powerful effects of radio broadcasts had been accepted and documented by the enthusiastic responses of faithful Catholics around the world. Mostly, though, it was Pius XII's firm belief in the power of the airwaves that consolidated his status as the "father" of religious mass communication.⁵⁰

As Father Robert Graham points out, Vatican authorities communicated with the world on many levels. Privately, diplomatic communication occurred confidentially between the Holy See and its *nuncios* and Bishops around the world. With regards to mass communication, while *L'Osservatore Romano* continued to be the official media

organ⁵¹ of the Church publishing papal addresses, encyclicals as well as reporting important international news, *Radio Vaticana* maintained an apparent degree of autonomy from the Holy See. At this point, the radio station broadcast in many different languages, including English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.⁵² No one among either side, the Allies or the Axis, really believed in the freedom of *Radio Vaticana* from the Holy See and both sides tried to use it to further their own propagandistic objectives. Nevertheless, it was a clever approach. By maintaining the Catholic radio station as the instrument to broadcast the Pope's voice but not to serve as the official voice of the Vatican in political matters, *Radio Vaticana* could enjoy a larger degree of freedom while reaching considerably more sizeable audiences than Italian language *L'Osservatore Romano* ever could; this freedom of expression would reach a dramatic climax in the first two years of the war.

At the outbreak of the Second World War on September 1939 *Radio Vaticana* found itself, in the words of Father Graham, "willingly or unwillingly inevitably implicated in the propaganda battle of both belligerent sides".⁵³ During the conflict's first phase, namely for the first sixteen months, the Jesuit-run station took its strongest stand against Germany as the aggressor. Many broadcasts in various languages condemned Hitler's atrocities against Poland and the Jewish people. The station adamantly denounced the abuses suffered by Catholics in German-controlled areas. Such overtly negative behaviour could obviously not please the Nazis, but was nothing short of manna for the British who did not hesitate to use *Radio Vaticana*'s programmes as part of their own propaganda. The BBC monitored and reported these programmes, at times eliminating portions, or, at others, adding extra propaganda elements to emphasize

particularly important issues. Both the Allies and the Axis recognized the Vatican radio station's power in shaping the collective attitudes of faithful Catholics everywhere. It should come as no surprise then, that, as Robert Graham states,

Some clandestine radio stations⁵⁴ claimed to be Radio Vaticana. Goebbels swore to silence it; members of the French resistance movement would transcribe its broadcasts and distribute the texts clandestinely. Therefore, it had its apostles but also its martyrs. Catholics and non-Catholics in Germany and elsewhere were imprisoned for having listened to the 'voice of the Pope', not to mention many innocents who were struck by Gestapo raids for Vatican broadcasts that they had never even heard.⁵⁵

On 28 September 1939 *Radio Vaticana* transmitted what has now become a very famous speech by Cardinal August Hlond, the Primate of Poland. At the time of the broadcast, he was a refugee in Rome. He spoke of the injustices rendered to his country by the German aggressor:

Martyred Poland, you have fallen to violence while you fought for the sacred cause of freedom...On these radio waves, which run across the world, carrying truth from the hill of the Vatican, I cry to you. Poland, you are not beaten.⁵⁶

The address was but a precursor of the type of programmes that inflamed the airwaves in 1940-1941, angering the Germans and delighting the British. The Vatican was well-aware that the "voice of the Pope" and his exiled Primate could have a formidable impact on the collective consciousness of Catholics and non-Catholics everywhere.

Pope Pius XII was unquestionably involved in programming decisions during those first sixteen months of war although the Vatican and *L'Osservatore Romano* stressed repeatedly that the *Segreteria di Stato* (Secretariat of State) did not control or direct the choice of materials heard on the airwaves. Following a controversial broadcast about the annexation of Austria, *L'Osservatore Romano* mentioned twice that the radio

station was “private in nature” and not subordinate to the Vatican administration.⁵⁷ The following conversation between the Vatican Under Secretary of State Monsignor Tardini and the Italian Ambassador (13 June, 1941) to the Holy See illustrates the scepticism of all those in government who listened to *Radio Vaticana*:

Ambassador: ‘You say that Vatican Radio has nothing to do with the *Segreteria di Stato* but no one believes it’.

Tardini: ‘But it is true’.

Ambassador: ‘If I told you that Italian Radio did not depend on the Government would you believe me?’

Tardini: ‘If you said, it I would believe it’.

Ambassador: ‘You would be the only one to believe it.’⁵⁸

Repeatedly, the broadcasts emanating from *Radio Vaticana* denounced the horrors and injustices of the war. On 26 October 1939, for instance, a programme devoted to the Feast of Christ the King discussed for the first time the causes of the war (26 October 1939). The interesting thing about the programme was its tone of open condemnation of the war that strayed from the approach that had been taken after the First World War. Rather, the broadcast was more in line with the rhetorical style of Benedict XV:⁵⁹

In modern language these murders against human co-existing take on different names: exaggerated nationalism, the fever toward commercial and political hegemony, the arbitrary betrayal of pre-established promises, the monopoly of goods, the enslaving of entire populations, despotism and the use of violence.⁶⁰

The following day, on 27 October 1939, Pope Pius XII’s first encyclical was published. Using the anniversary of the Feast of Christ the King as an opportunity to speak out on the notion of a Christian society, the Pope in *Summi Pontificatus* stressed Christian morals rather than the individual desires of a few interested parties. In other words, Pope Pius XII stressed the juxtaposition between the moral state instituted by

Christ and the totalitarian state created by the existing authorities. Similarly to Benedict XV's statement after the march on Rome, this encyclical stressed the power of the Kingdom of Christ:

In such disposition of time and temperament...may the approaching Feast of Christ the King...be a day of grace and of thorough renewal and revival in the spirit of the Kingdom of Christ. May it be a day when the consecration of the human race to the Divine Heart, which should be celebrated in a particularly solemn manner, will gather the Faithful of all peoples and all nations around the throne of the Eternal King, in adoration and in reparation, to renew now and for ever their oath of allegiance to Him and to His law of truth and love.⁶¹

Interestingly, the new Pope was careful to stress the gratitude and recognition of the harmony between the Catholic Church and the Italian nation following the Lateran Accords. This move seemed to differ from the attitude chosen by Pope Pius XI right before his death. Perhaps Pius XII wanted to remind Mussolini of the intrinsic power of the pact, and its importance in Italian society as an expression of harmony between Church and state that had certainly benefited the Fascist regime:

But We must, in obedience to an inner prompting, make special mention of Our gratitude for the tokens of reverent homage which we have had from the Sovereigns, heads of States and Governments of those nations with which the Holy See is in friendly relations. Our heart is joyous especially at the thought that We can, in this first Encyclical directed to the whole Christian people scattered over the world, rank among such friendly powers Our dear Italy, fruitful garden of the Faith...For, as a result of the Lateran Pacts, her representative occupies a place of honour among those officially accredited to the Apostolic See. 'The Peace of Christ Restored to Italy', like a new dawn of brotherly union in religious and civil intercourse, had its beginning in these Pacts...⁶²

Summi Pontificatus also highlighted the dangers of distancing “civil authority” from “divine authority”, affirming that abuses of power are an inevitable consequence of such a rupture:

It is the error contained in those ideas which do not hesitate to divorce civil authority from every kind of dependence upon the Supreme Being-First Source and absolute Master of man and of society-and from every restraint of a Higher Law derived from God and from its First Source. Thus they accord the civil authority an unrestricted field of action that is at the mercy of the changeful tide of human will, or of the dictates of casual historical claims, and of the interest of a few.⁶³

Although Pius XII did not mention any of the powers involved in the conflict, some of his statements indicated his disapproval of Germany’s domestic foreign policy:

To consider the State as something ultimate to which everything else should be subordinate and directed, cannot fail to harm the true and lasting prosperity of nations. This can happen either when unrestricted dominion comes to be conferred on the State as having a mandate from the nation, people, or even a social order, or when the State arrogates such dominion to itself as absolute master, despotically, without any mandate whatsoever.⁶⁴

The Holy Father went on to openly condemn any political system that would attempt to rob its youth of a Christian education. In these following statements we see the same line of reasoning followed by both of his predecessors:

Now what scandal is more permanently harmful to generation after generation, than a formation of youth which is misdirected towards a goal that alienates from Christ, ‘the Way and the Truth and the Life’ and leads to open or hidden apostasy from Christ... The idea which credits the State with unlimited authority is not simply an error harmful to the internal life of nations, to their prosperity, and to the larger and well-ordered increase in their well-being, but likewise it injures the relations between people, for it breaks the unity of supra-national society, robs the

law of nations of its foundation and vigour, leads to violation of other's rights and impedes agreement and peaceful intercourse.⁶⁵

The implications that condemn Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany were very clear, namely keeping the youth from being educated about Christ and making the state infallible. Although, again, no specific names were mentioned, it was not difficult to draw these conclusions. Pope Pius XII went on to admonish nations of the intrinsic and imminent danger of separating human law from divine law and encouraging them not to abuse the trust established among different parties when diplomatic treaties are signed, a sign of awareness of the impending doom caused by Europe's political situation:

...to tear the law of nations from its anchor in Divine law, to base it on the autonomous will of State, is to dethrone that very law and deprive it of its noblest and strongest qualities. Thus it would stand abandoned to the fatal drive of private interest and collective selfishness exclusively intent on the assertion of its own rights and ignoring those of others...to consider treaties on principle as ephemeral and tacitly to assume the authority of rescinding them unilaterally when they are no longer to one's advantage, would be to abolish the mutual trust among States. In this way, natural order would be destroyed and there would be seen dug between different peoples and nations trenches of division impossible to refill.⁶⁶

The voice of *Radio Vaticana* returned over and over to the encyclical, primarily discussing its theological ramifications and refraining from discussing current politics. A month later, however, a broadcast placed particular emphasis on the difference between the ideals of a Christian society and those of a Bolshevik or neo-pagan Nazi society.⁶⁷ As historian Monticone points out, although *Radio Vaticana* had been reporting on a comment taken from a Swiss newspaper, the ideas expressed by Pope Pius

XII in *Summi Pontificatus* were obviously related to the station's condemnation of totalitarianism.⁶⁸

In the world, as it is conceived by Catholicism, there is no room for Bolshevik atheism, for national-socialist neo-paganism or for other concepts of social life in which a god, very vaguely conceived of, is invoked for one's own specific interests. These strange ideas of divinity would like to base the idea of God, in an absurd manner...or in race or in blood.⁶⁹

The sixteen-month campaign

These types of broadcasts irrevocably led to the beginning of the sixteen-month campaign, which started with a broadcast on 22 January 1940, after specific directives from Pope Pius XII.⁷⁰ Before then, however, the Jesuit management of the radio station was already committed to exposing some of the abuses perpetrated by the totalitarian regimes. One example came from a broadcast made by Father Pellegrino on 30 November, 1939 in which the Jesuit priest declared that the Catholic Church would not stand by silently and watch the abuses inflicted by modern day tyrants:

The Catholic Church is certainly the legitimate custodian of divine rights. Very often during the centuries and even today she is forced to scream out her *non licet* against this or that new born Herod who, with much larger and graver consequences than the abuses of a private life, try to suppress them. No one can be surprised if the Church intervenes and repeats in a loud voice the *non licet* of John the Baptist or the *non possumus non loqui* of Saint Peter. She is not afraid of prison, torments or, and it may be the most serious of all, a sudden return to the Catacombs. To not follow this line of conduct or to look for compromises would mean a betrayal of Her mission, would be an offence against He who elected Her as His bride and would cheat all those who, disillusioned by men and by their systems, look to the Church as the last beam of light, the last table of safety, a firm rock one can hold on to escape the abyss.⁷¹

As was noted earlier, these types of radio “conversations”⁷² were the prelude to the extremely firm stance that would be taken by Radio Vaticana against religious persecution at the beginning of 1940.

Another example of the more diplomatic, official position undertaken by the Catholic Church came from Pope Pius XII himself during the first Christmas broadcast of his pontificate in December 1939. Although again, the message did not name specifically any of the interested parties, it was not difficult to identify the nations who carried the “moral responsibility”⁷³ for the outbreak of war. It cannot be forgotten that Pope Pius XII had extensive experience in the world of diplomacy and used that style of communication throughout his pontificate. A summary of the most important points made during the broadcast is worth mentioning. Pope Pius XII began with the affirmation that the war which had been predicted by his predecessor was now a sad reality:

The world seems to have forgotten the peaceful message of Christ and we have observed a series of acts which are not consistent with the precepts of positive international law and natural law (aggressions against a small and laborious country. Atrocities and illicit use of methods of destruction disdain for the dignity of freedom and of human life.⁷⁴

After discussing Pope Pius XI’s failed attempts toward peace as well as the general horrors brought about by war, which included the complete breakdown of a functioning economic system, Pius XII established the famous fundamental five points for a successful peace: (1) ensure the ‘right to life and to independence of all nations’⁷⁵; (2) free nations from the race toward armaments and from the danger that force may again become violent tyranny of law⁷⁶; (3) keep in mind ineffective past experiences so as to avoid duplicating them during the reconstruction of the international institutions and

revise and potentially correct previously existing legal systems and institutions⁷⁷; (4) create a new order in Europe, one that would fulfil the needs and requests of nations, including those of ethnic minorities; and also, (5) ensure that leaders and citizens of 'different nations allow themselves to be guided by a sense of moral responsibility which governs human affairs according to the norms of divine law'.⁷⁸ It is interesting to note that the Pontiff's five points resemble President Wilson's Fourteen Points for a just peace given in a speech to Congress in 1918. The points became the parameters for peace in Europe after the end of the First World War. Pope Pius XII echoed President Wilson's sentiments with regards to the establishment of "open covenants of peace" among nations that would prohibit secret agreements; Wilson declared the need to reduce the number of armaments, to make fair adjustments of colonial claims that would seriously take into account the interests of the concerned populations and to reconstruct Europe based on justice and fair dealing.

The only other relevant note in the Pope's broadcast was the announcement that the retired corporate leader and Episcopal lay leader Myron Taylor would come to the Vatican as the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See.⁷⁹ Despite considerable internal opposition to Roosevelt's decision, the American president deemed that it was in the best interest of the United States to have a representative inside the Vatican. Once he arrived in Rome in 1940, Taylor remained for ten years, covering the entire war period and offering an invaluable wealth of information as well as a first-hand perspective regarding the position of the Vatican in the war. His appointment could obviously not go unnoticed among Nazi and Fascist authorities. By including a reference to it in the broadcasts, Pope

Pius XII clearly indicated the fostering of cordial relations between the Vatican and the still neutral United States.

At the beginning of 1940, then, the Catholic Church seemed to be operating on two levels. On one side, there was the diplomatic, semi-neutral and non-specifically condemning line of conduct adopted by the Vatican hierarchy and by the Pope himself. On the other, in the news programmes and interviews of *Radio Vaticana*, a more aggressive and openly condemning attitude toward Nazism and its anti-Catholicism, as well as anti-Communism, could be seen. It would be elementary to think that the two attitudes could be separated from each other; rather, they were the best way for the Vatican to reach out and have an impact on different audiences, namely the heads of states and diplomatic corps through the official communiqués and the faithful followers everywhere through the airwaves. By feigning a lack of control over the “independently” managed *Radio Vaticana*, Pope Pius XII could show victims of German and Russian abuse that the Church could still be a beacon of light for them, while officially keeping an attitude of neutrality based on the condemnation of war and violence as general themes. In 1940 *Radio Vaticana* also began transmitting the “names of prisoners of war and interned civilians”⁸⁰ that had been discovered and collected by the Vatican Information Office, a special agency created solely to find the missing. While EIAR could not broadcast the increasingly large number of war prisoners’ names, the *Ufficio Informazioni* would continue and intensify its work well into 1943 and during the collapse of Fascism, providing a vital information service for families and soldiers alike.⁸¹

Pope Pius XII's involvement in the official beginning of the sixteen-month campaign was documented in a note by Monsignor Montini, Deputy of the State Secretariat dated 19 January, 1940 as reported in the *Actes*: '*Ex audientia Sanctissimi*. Give information to Radio Vaticana for the German broadcast on the conditions of the Catholic Church in Poland.' This brief communiqué seems to indicate with relative certainty that the Pontiff wanted *Radio Vaticana* to broadcast the conditions of Catholics in Poland. It also shows the priority given by Pius XII to the religious persecution of Polish Catholics, something that, as the evidence shows, took precedence over any other condemnation of Nazi atrocities.

On 21 January 1940, the first programme of the campaign went on the air in German. The following day it was broadcast in other languages, including Italian. As one of the first aired openly anti-Nazi broadcasts, this text has been reproduced before in parts, but seeing it in its entirety gives a much better understanding of its impact:

News coming from German-occupied Poland becomes more serious every day. We will come back to the topic during other programmes, but for now we limit ourselves to mentioning that the conditions of religious, political, and economic life have thrown that noble people, also in the regions occupied by Germany, into a state of terror and barbaric actions very similar to that imposed on Spain in 1936 by the Communists. One of the inhuman aspects of such terror is created by the exodus of entire populations from their countries, destined to go to other distant regions. The exodus happens with harsh and sudden orders. In a few hours the small town or a section of a city must be emptied and those leaving are forbidden from taking with them any money or personal belonging. Then they are herded in mass and guarded by soldiers. Once they arrive to the unknown destination, after a terrible trip that often happens in the open under the snow, they are left to fend for themselves. Famine and diseases are rampant. Such cases happen every day.'⁸²

After the signing of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact in earlier 1939, Germany (1 September) and Soviet Russia (17 September) invaded Poland in September 1939, dividing it into Nazi and Soviet-controlled areas. While the Polish government in exile was forced to move from Paris to London when France collapsed in May 1940, large numbers of Polish citizens were taken to Germany for forced labour while many others were murdered. In his book, *Polish Society Under German Occupation: the General Government, 1939-1944*, the historian Tomasz Gross emphasizes the abuses suffered by the Polish people. Poland lost 20 percent of its population in the war-six million citizens, half of them Jews, half Poles. Also, apart from the Jews, Poles were the largest national group in Nazi concentration camps. In 1939, the population of Poland counted thirty plus million inhabitants; in 1945, more than six million Polish citizens had been killed by the Germans. The broadcast from *Radio Vaticana* highlighted but one aspect of the terrible conditions developing in the country:

Polish people fear that they will be destroyed. With regards to the religious situation, from the reports we have received we have learned that the Germans are using the same methods, or maybe even worse ones, used by the Soviets. Many Churches were destroyed, closed down or desecrated. There are also too many cases of unbelievable sacrilegious acts, executions and horrendously harsh imprisonments of priests. The destruction of crosses and sacred icons is reminiscent of the atheist horrors in Barcelona under the red tyranny. Religious services, where permitted, are limited to Sunday and only for two hours. In the so-called Polish reserve (land reserved to the Polish people), squalid misery reigns, also because that territory was the most plagued repeatedly by war. These statements give only a faded image of what Poland has become under German occupation.⁸³

It is impossible to read the text of this programme and not see an open denouncement of Hitler's government. Almost defiantly, *Radio Vaticana* brought to light the ugly truth of the German occupation, something that Goebbels' propaganda was trying very hard to keep hidden. In addition to doing just that, the programme announced that more broadcasts of the same nature would appear on the airwaves in the near future.

It was mentioned previously that to attempt to comprehend the political attitude of the Catholic Church in the period under scrutiny, one needs to understand the communication style of the Vatican. The broadcasts that took place in the first sixteen months of the war are a perfect example of the oblique style of communication adopted by the Pontiff and his closest associates. Because of the newfound state's precarious position at the beginning of the hostilities due to Mussolini's alliance with Hitler, the Vatican's only way to pressure Germany to stop its aggressive behaviour was through these apparently independent statements of opinions made by the Jesuit fathers. Although it is obvious that permission to broadcast such information was obtained at the highest levels of the Vatican hierarchy, the Pontiff and his closest associates distanced themselves from potential criticism by authorizing these criticisms without taking responsibility for them. Too much was at stake for the Church: the safety of the Vatican state and its inhabitants as well as that of Catholics in Nazi-occupied territories. It cannot be overlooked that the Vatican's continued existence was dependent upon Mussolini's pragmatic view of whether it was in his best interests to maintain the Catholic state. The attempt at pressuring the German government was obviously unsuccessful, but that should not detract from the courage exhibited by *Radio Vaticana* at such a difficult time

in its history, and perhaps it sheds some light on the rationale for the eventual silencing of the radio station in 1941.

German intelligence was very concerned about the propaganda efforts emanating from the Vatican state and employed varying strategies to monitor it. *L'Osservatore Romano* was required reading at the German embassy, which would select articles to include in its reports to Berlin. Both Hitler and Mussolini considered the Vatican newspaper hostile to their cause and increasingly more worrisome as its circulation rose from 80,000 in 1939 to 150,000 by May 1940.⁸⁴ Despite its lack of blatantly controversial content, one need only look back at the report that was discussed earlier in this chapter by a Fascist newspaper condemning *L'Osservatore Romano* and its readers to know that the Fascist authorities were extremely displeased with it.

The Germans monitored *Radio Vaticana* through the *Sonderdienst Seehaus*.⁸⁵ Since the mid-1930's, Goebbels had taken steps to ensure that it would be very difficult for the German people to pick up foreign broadcasts through the *Volksempfänger*, an inexpensive radio designed to only receive German stations. Anyone who wanted to hear *Radio Vaticana* or any other international station had to acquire a short-wave receiver, something that was immediately communicated to the secret police with grave consequences. At the beginning of the war, on 7 September 1939 specifically, the German government promulgated even stricter laws that prohibited its residents from listening to foreign stations:

It is forbidden to listen to foreign radio stations; those whose propagandistic objectives can harm the strength of resistance of the German people can be punished with prison, and in extremely serious cases, even with death.⁸⁶

A noteworthy victim of the German secret police was the priest Alfons Wachsman who was sentenced to death and executed on 24 February 1944 for having listened to the Vatican and British stations and for having encouraged others to do the same; another is the case of Father Carl Lampert who, interned at Dachau, which had been a concentration camp since 1933, was executed for having given information to *Radio Vaticana*.⁸⁷

Despite the German government's increasing protests and its persecution of Catholics, *Radio Vaticana* continued its broadcasting. Regardless of one's opinion about the role assumed by the Pontiff in 1941, the programmes that were broadcast in the first phase of the war were unquestionably brave and clear in their condemnation of the abuses perpetrated against the Polish people. On 23 January 1940 the second programme of this nature was aired in English for North America by Father J.E. Coffey:

Jewish and Polish people are amassed in separate ghettos which are closed hermetically and are completely inadequate for the economic survival of the people who are forced to live inside them... (but the worse iniquity) was the cynical suppression of even the smallest sign of religious observance in the lives in these people, probably one of the most pious and devoted people in Europe.⁸⁸

The programme was followed by many others in French, German and Portuguese; the one in Polish was read by Father Felice Lason.⁸⁹ The condemnation of Nazi terror tactics was undisputably present; even more interestingly, though, is the statement regarding the suppression of religious observances. The fact that the Vatican could argue that the suppression of religion was the "worse iniquity" suffered by these "pious" people sadly suggests the priorities of the Church. Even though it is expected that the Catholic Church would condemn any suppression of religious expression, one wonders if *Radio Vaticana* considered discussing the living conditions in the Jewish ghettos and the different (and

worse) types of atrocities suffered by the Jews; if so, one again wonders why they were not able to do so.

While both the German and the Italian authorities were preoccupied with the programming adopted by the Catholic station, the Allied Press used the information to add additional negative comments regarding the behaviour of the Axis. On 24 January 1940 the *New York Times* wrote:

The Vatican radio station made two more broadcasts today, adding many details to the atrocities that supposedly are being committed in German-occupied Poland. It is now clear that the papacy is throwing the whole weight of its publicizing facilities into this expose' of conditions which...profoundly pained the Pope.

In reality, the Vatican was not actually implementing its whole media apparatus to condemn the German actions since *L'Osservatore Romano* did not report anything on the subject, advancing effectively the hypothesis that the Church had adopted a neutral façade despite its activism in support of Catholics in occupied Europe. The article went on to state:

The material for these talks, it is now learned, forms what amounts to an unofficial 'Blue Book' compiled by the office of Cardinal Hlond, Archbishop of Gniezno and Posen, here in Rome...Only the surface of this mass of facts has been scratched by the three broadcasts thus far made, and it is most likely that other talks will be given. Some of the material, it is stated, is too horrible to be given over the air or printed.

While most of the article was similar to the actual news broadcast from *Radio Vaticana*, one specific section gave even more details regarding the deportation of increasing numbers of Polish people:

The unhappy population had to make room for Germans who arrived from other countries. 'We would not refer to this if the forced immigration had been carried

out in a loyal way,⁹⁰ but, here too, loyalty forbids us to remain silent...On Nov. 9 300 families were transferred from Gniezno. On Dec. 3 an additional 150 families followed. At Inowrocziaw, on the night of Nov. 30, about 1,000 families were assembled into the market place and packed into goods trains, which left for an unknown destination. In the middle of December 1,500 were in a like manner transported from Znin and all these people and many more were left in the direst poverty with the spectre of famine before their eyes.

On the same day (24 January 1940) in England, the *Manchester Guardian* made similar comments in an editorial:

The tormented Poland has found an incredibly powerful advocate. The Vatican broadcast will produce a deep impression in the conscience of the entire Christian world...it is an admonishment-for all those who appreciate our civilization-of the mortal danger Europe is experiencing.

Father Graham reported that the material that had been used as evidence for the radio broadcast against the Nazis had come from a special report delivered directly to Pope Pius XII by Tomas Reginek, a priest who had recently escaped from Poland through Hungary. In 1950, Father Reginek published a short pamphlet⁹¹ in which he recalled his meeting with the Holy Father, saying that Pope Pius XII had met him first and had taken the report from him. Then, 'a few days later I was invited to listen to *Radio Vaticana* which broadcast word for word the memorandum that I had presented to the Pope.'⁹² Interestingly, Father Reginek's pamphlet did not mention explicitly the persecution of Jews, but concentrated instead on the Nazi terror tactics in Poland, another indication that the Church authorities were treading carefully on extremely dangerous ground and choosing to avoid accusations of atrocities against the Jewish people. One has a suspicion that the Church's traditional anti-Semitism might well have been a factor in that decision.

Once again, Germany was quick to protest. On 27 January 1940 Monsignor Montini reported that Fritz Menshausen, Embassy Councillor, had gone to the Vatican to protest the programmes and had warned that reprisals could occur in Germany if such material continued to be aired.⁹³ Another note by Monsignor Tardini found in the *Actes* told what happened next: 'The Holy Father told me to suspend the programmes for the moment. I answered with the hope that such broadcasts may resume very soon. His Holiness smiled and agreed.'⁹⁴ While it is certainly true that the programmes emanating from the Vatican condemned Germany's aggressive behaviour, it should also be noted that on more than one occasion the BBC would embellish them by adding their own propaganda elements, such as expanded commentaries and false news reports.⁹⁵ A note sent by Father Soccorsi to Monsignor Tardini gives credence to this point. He stated that the BBC had reported the Vatican programmes, but "by adding to it things that were not said by us".⁹⁶ On 20 February of the same year, another letter sent this time by the Italian ambassador in Germany commented that the Vatican broadcast had created a "sense of uneasiness in the Ministry of Propaganda" because of the explanations wanted by the foreign Press.⁹⁷

Radio Vaticana waited a month before transmitting its next highly controversial programme. Then, on 13 February 1940, the Catholic station broadcast a new programme with a different target. In a bold move, it denounced Germany itself. The heading for the programme, "the process of elimination of the Catholic Church in the German national life", told clearly what was to come:

The breaking down of the Catholic organizations for the youth, for students, for women, etc., of the suppression of the religious Press and of the schools, of the intimidation against practicing Catholics and of other restrictions, to end with the

attempts to forbid the distribution of the papal encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*. The programme also revealed secret instructions against soldiers who, returning home from the front, would visit their priests because (the priests) were enemies of the state.⁹⁸

Shortly after the broadcast, on 17 March 1940, the Papal Nuncio⁹⁹ in Berlin Archbishop Orsenigo, sent a copy of a “declaration of apostasy” written by a Nazi representative as a consequence of the ‘defaming propaganda campaign of attacks of Vatican Radio against our Fuhrer and the German people.’¹⁰⁰ Also, a copy of the broadcast in German targeting German Catholic audiences was published in translation in the *English Catholic Newsletter*.¹⁰¹

Critical anti- Nazi broadcasts continued on 15 June of the same year. This time in French, the political commentary used Nazism as an example of the ‘manifestation of the brutal and barbaric behaviour of human nature.’ Shortly thereafter, on 16 September 1940, *Radio Vaticana* began to criticize the Nazi platform regarding education of the youth. The criticism was reported by the foreign Press, namely the *New York Times*. Although it was not confirmed, it seems plausible that the author of the programme was the American Jesuit, Father Vincent McCormick. As reported in the American newspaper, *Radio Vaticana* stated:

What was the status of religious education in Germany in the past? Elementary schools belonged to the State, and all children were obliged to attend them for about eight years. Respect for the different religious profession of the children was scrupulously shown by dividing schools according to religion. Thus there were provided by the State Catholic elementary schools-with Catholic teachers, textbooks respectful of the Catholic faith, with a teacher of the Catholic religion approved by the Bishop.¹⁰²

The article continued by reporting that the new lack of respect for the Catholic faith was a glaring breach of the 1933 Concordat between Germany and the Vatican, an accommodation not unlike the Lateran Accords:

This held for almost all Germany....an in the Concordat solemnly entered into between the Holy See and the present Reich in 1933. It was explicitly stipulated in Article 23 that the schools for those professing the Catholic faith would be maintained and increased...contrary to this clear and explicit provision of the Concordat...all Catholic elementary schools have been turned into common schools-that is to say-into schools where all the youth are to be formed and educated to the principles of Nazism.¹⁰³

The last section of the article was entitled "Poisoning of education;" in it, the Jesuit priest discussed the mental brainwashing of young people who had been indoctrinated by the dangerous precepts of the Nazi ideology:

...As a matter of fact...the education of our Catholic young boys and girls has been poisoned by nothing so effectively as by the new schools...as to the schools of college standing...with rare and decreasing exceptions, have all been forcibly closed...I do not say that all private colleges have been closed, but all Catholic private colleges have been forcibly closed. In the colleges belonging to the State religious instruction is either not given at all or restricted to the lower classes. In all intermediate schools between elementary and university no religious instruction is given.¹⁰⁴

The broadcasts from *Radio Vaticana* continued to cause tension between the Holy See, Germany and, indirectly, Italy. Prior to the second programme, on October 1940, the German Embassy strongly protested against a radio commentary which had called the German invasion of Alsace-Lorraine after 1940 'tragic and inhuman.'¹⁰⁵ Berlin's vehement response prompted Pope Pius XII to direct the Jesuit administration of *Radio Vaticana* to reduce the number of broadcasts with anti-Nazi commentaries. The rational

was clear: the Pontiff was afraid that Hitler would retaliate even more violently against Catholics living in Germany Nazi-controlled Europe. Additionally, diplomatically adroit Pope Pius XII was concerned that the carefully built façade of neutrality on the part of the Vatican was suffering.¹⁰⁶ He was not wrong in his suppositions. In an outspoken statement, Menshausen, Rome's German Embassy Councillor who normally spoke for the German government, accused the Holy See:

The asserted autonomy of the Vatican is not admissible since the Holy See is the most totalitarian of all regimes and (considering that) the Secretariat of State has many means to stop the radio station.¹⁰⁷

It is clear that the German government wanted to expose the Pontiff's strategy and let the Vatican know that the real objectives of Pope Pius XII were ridiculously transparent.

As a result of increasing German and Italian pressure the Pope began to fear the impact of his "unauthorized" policy. The Pope would have ended it sooner if Father Wladimir Ledochowski, the Polich-born Superior General of the Jesuits and a Pole himself, had not intervened. Instead the Pontiff listened to the Jesuit's opinion who was virtually running *Radio Vaticana* and believed that the United States should be made fully aware of the persecution of the Church in German-controlled territory.¹⁰⁸

The programmes continued after Victor General, Father Ledochowski, S.J. received direct instructions from Pope Pius XII to 'limit the broadcasts to a summary of facts, without comments or judgments, and after having personally reviewed the text.'¹⁰⁹

The Superior General of the Jesuits thought of another strategy to ensure that the United States would continue receiving information about the persecutions occurring in German-occupied countries while at the same time minimizing diplomatic incidents between the Nazis and the Holy See: reduce the number of broadcasts in English and increase those in

Spanish. He believed that the latter would reach the ears of the Americans, too.¹¹⁰ On 2 October 1940, the Catholic Spanish newspaper *Correo Catalan* published an article entitled the “The religious birth of the former Poland.” A few weeks later, on 23 October 1940, Pope Pius XII asked that the article be reproduced on the radio in Spanish at first, and successively in other languages, as well. Father Ledochowski wrote to Cardinal Maglione that the directives had been given to him by the Pope and that “the Nazi government absolutely does not want the world to be informed of the systematic persecution of the Church of Christ”.¹¹¹ The end of the broadcast clearly denounced the Nazi manipulation of truth regarding Poland:

Poland is not experiencing that budding religious life that the writer of the article would want us to believe; rather, Polish Catholics are in dire need of the prayers of Catholics worldwide to be supported in their trying times.¹¹²

The same programme was broadcast in English for India on 12 November, 1940 and in French on 29 November. The French broadcast ended with this warning:

This gives us the right to ask that Catholics exercise great caution in listening to news programmes that they cannot verify for their presumed authenticity, and which are an attempt to have (Catholics) accept anti-Christian concepts under the guise of comforting news spread by its propagators.¹¹³

The attitude of the radio broadcaster was perfectly mirrored inside the Vatican. Indeed, on 25 October, Monsignor Tardini had noted that,

The Father Superior General of the Jesuits tells me that yesterday Vatican Radio responded (to the article). He predicts protests but adds that 1. there is no other method of defence than Radio; 2. that the Nazi are more afraid of truth than they are of war; 3. that, even if the broadcast is jammed in one nation it is heard in others. It only needs to reach one destination to be known everywhere.¹¹⁴

Although the German protests arrived promptly with a visit by Menshausen to Monsignor Tardini, *Radio Vaticana* continued its broadcasts. Some of the programmes that aired on the Jesuit station were in direct response to German propaganda that was aimed at discrediting and minimizing the alarm raised by the Vatican.

On 19 November, 1940 Werner Haugg, an agent of the Third Reich, had written an article in the Madrid-based newspaper *El Alcazar*¹¹⁵ in which he affirmed that “national socialism was a religious movement based on the principles of Christianity”.¹¹⁶ Shortly thereafter, *Radio Vaticana* went on the air in Spanish first, and later in English for India and in French:

In order to ensure that truth be told, it is necessary to compare such statements with the reality...If Nazism is a Christian movement why did it shut down the schools? Why were monasteries confiscated in Austria? Why the fight against Christian marriage? In Polish-occupied territories there is a grave shortage of priests, even though four hundred Polish priests were transported to Germany...in light of such events how can we affirm that the words of the editorial are true, according to which ‘the respect of Nazism for religious organizations has been proven both inside and outside of the Third Reich?’¹¹⁷

The French programme ended on a slightly different note, with an admonition to Catholics about believing news coming from those holding anti-Christian principles who were trying to distort the truth.

The British as well as American media were quick to report the anti-Nazi comments made on *Radio Vaticana*. The BBC commented:

A remarkable broadcast by Vatican City radio has summarized the Catholic Church’s attitude toward Nazi Germany in no uncertain terms. The broadcast was in reply to an assertion published by the Spanish newspaper *Alcazar* that German Nazi socialism was not contradictory to Christian ideals.¹¹⁸

The BBC Vatican broadcasts were reported in a front-page article of the *New York Times* entitled “*Vatican says Nazism is foe of Christianity; Lists persecutions in Reich to support charge*”, which went on to quote verbatim the rest of *Radio Vaticana*’s transmission. The same broadcast was also reported in full by the *London Times* two days later. The British would continue to cite *Radio Vaticana* and to comment about the station’s brave attitude in denouncing Nazi aggression. Toward the end of 1940, for example, a journalist from the *Tablet*, a Roman Catholic weekly publication, who had access to the *Daily Digest*, the BBC’s monitoring service, wrote: ‘It is a pity that those who think that the *Vatican* may be softening their opposition toward Nazism cannot listen to the broadcasts coming from *Radio Vaticana*.’¹¹⁹ Because the *Daily Digest* was secret, the information was obviously leaked, a clear example of propaganda given by the Foreign Office to a paid journalist. It should be noted that the Vatican programmes in Spanish were also monitored by General Franco’s Propaganda Ministry as well as by the Italian Fascist authorities as well. On 20 November, 1940 the Italian Ministry of Popular Culture reported:

We want to communicate that for several days *Radio Vaticana*, in a broadcast in Spanish occurring at 21:21 on short wave m.80 approximately, has began a series of ‘conversations’ in which she¹²⁰ violently attacks Nazi socialism from the Catholic perspective. The speaker is a priest who accuses Nazism of a systematic campaign against Catholics.¹²¹

At the beginning of 1941 *Radio Vaticana* intensified its protests against the Nazi government’s attack on the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches as well as Jewish synagogues following an editorial that had been published in the Spanish newspaper *Hoja de Lunes*. The author, Claudio Mariani, denied that Nazism was against religion or, specifically, Catholicism. The editorial was amply reported in the Italian Fascist

newspapers such as *Il Messaggero*, and *Il Giornale d'Italia*.¹²² *Radio Vaticana* took a vigorous position and, on 29 January 1941, released a secret directive from someone in the Nazi government who was a Catholic sympathizer, specifying the government's intention to prohibit men from joining the priesthood. The document stated specifically that 'it was not desirable that people who could work should enter in religious orders, convents or monasteries.'¹²³ Hitler himself noted in a conversation with his closest associates that the Vatican was a dangerous enemy which reported information leaked clandestinely from Germany:

There is in Italy a third power, don't forget it. Why be surprised if our confidential letters are broadcast to the world just a few days after they have been received?¹²⁴

About a month later, on 3 February 1941, *Radio Vaticana* reported that the Benedictine monastery of Bregenz in Austria had been confiscated by the Germans while its inhabitants had been expelled from it:

Another candle has been extinguished...Spanish republicans used to give ten days of warning when closing monasteries. The Nazis only gave eight hours!...We hope that with this example the Spanish people will realize the exact condition of the Catholic Church in Germany¹²⁵

These types of broadcasts continued throughout the spring of 1941. The BBC monitored the programmes and offers ample evidence of the consistent anti-Nazi stance taken by *Radio Vaticana*. On 1 April, for instance, in a broadcast in English for India and Ceylon, the Catholic station stated that, among other things, the Vatican 'looked with anxiety at the future of religious life in Germany.'¹²⁶ The broadcast also exposed that the Nazis practiced euthanasia on people with disabilities, although this part of the broadcast was, for reasons which are not clear, omitted from the BBC's secret and official

monitoring reports. The next day, yet another Spanish programme aired, condemning once again the German aggression against Alsace-Lorraine.¹²⁷ A few weeks later, on 25 April, *Radio Vaticana* aired in German the pastoral letter prepared by the Dutch Bishops who stated that 'this (Nazi) movement is a danger for all Christians.'¹²⁸

In the midst of these direct statements by the radio station, the Vatican itself had been, as was noted earlier, much less controversial in its official declarations. While *L'Osservatore Romano* published news and general comments regarding the global situation, it did not engage in any type of overt verbal crusade against the Axis power. Pope Pius XII, however, did warn the invading forces during one of his radio broadcasts on 13 April 1941: 'Don't forget that God's blessing or damnation for your country will depend upon the way you will be treating those who have been put in your hands by the war.'¹²⁹ Because, as Father Graham points out, at that point in time the only invading powers were Germany and Italy,¹³⁰ the warning was blatant and extremely unpopular among Axis officials. The German Ambassador Von Bergen reported to the German Foreign Office lamenting the Pontiff's lack of neutrality and shortly thereafter the Gestapo confiscated printed reports of the broadcast. To prevent a widespread dissemination of this message, reports of this broadcast were forbidden. Goebbels himself stated:

The Vatican radio station must be silenced...this would be very opportune since the radio station is more damaging than a Communist station because it speaks to forty million Catholics who do not consider their listening a crime since they consider it-for the most part-a religious institution.¹³¹

The words spoken by the German Propaganda Minister should leave no doubt that Germany considered the Vatican state an enemy. The Nazis expected that the officially

neutral façade of the Catholic Church would, if not help their cause, at least not work against it with world-wide public opinion. The broadcasts coming from *Radio Vaticana* were in direct contrast with German hopes and therefore were seen as potentially damaging.

After sixteen months of such clear anti-Nazi statements from the Vatican station, it appears that 28 April 1941 marked the point when the Pope no longer felt he could risk Germany bringing down its wrath on the German Catholic Church and its people. Father Ledochowski, Victor General of the Jesuits, was told in no uncertain terms by Cardinal Maglione that broadcasts should not mention again the religious persecutions occurring in Germany. Maglione also said that such directives would stay in place until further notice.¹³² Indeed, this seemed like a betrayal of the moral principles voiced by the Church up until that moment, as well as an abandonment of those silent victims of Nazism who could not denounce their condition. It should also be stressed, again, that the Church's condemnation of Nazi politics and terror tactics was confined primarily to the religious persecution of Catholics by the Nazis; the persecution of Jewish people was mentioned only indirectly as part of a larger denouncement of the horrors inflicted upon the Poles at the time of the German invasion. A closer look at the motivations that prompted Pope Pius XII's silencing of *Radio Vaticana*, as well as the immediate reactions of the Allies, might shed some light on the Vatican's new policy.

Pragmatic politics and the end of the sixteen-month campaign

Because the United States was not yet openly and directly involved in the war, Great Britain faced a particularly critical moment. It should come as no surprise that the Vatican radio station's attitude was of particular importance in shaping public opinion

against the Nazis, something crucial to the British propaganda efforts. When the “voice of the Vatican” disappeared, the Foreign Office’s reaction was immediate. The British Minister to the Vatican d’Arcy Osborne sent a telegraph home on the day that *Radio Vaticana* was silenced: ‘The Jesuits who run Vatican Radio have been given the order to cease all criticism regarding the anti-religious doctrine and practice of the Germans.’¹³³ He went on to state that it was logical to imagine that such a move had been motivated by German pressures. On 1 May 1941, Osborne also stated that ‘the independent position assumed by Vatican Radio is extremely important for our propaganda in general and for our appeals to the German Catholics specifically.’¹³⁴ Earlier in the conflict the British had been dissatisfied with the apparent Vatican neutrality and had been concerned that rumours of an understanding between the Vatican and the Axis powers may indeed be true. On 5 December 1940, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lord Halifax, had written:

If the Catholics of Belgium, Holland, and France for instance could be persuaded that in some way Nazism can be reconciled with their faith and with their moral principles then potentially, a powerful centre of resistance to Nazi plans would be eliminated. But we must also consider the effects that such a situation would have on the Catholics in the United States and Canada.¹³⁵

Although transmissions from *Radio Vaticana* over the past sixteen months had appeased some of these concerns, the new directives of Pope Pius XII brought them to the surface again, at least at first. On 22 May 1941, the new Foreign Secretary Sir Anthony Eden told the new Ambassador in Washington, his predecessor Lord Halifax, to encourage American Catholics to react against the new directives of the Pope concerning *Radio Vaticana*’s programming.¹³⁶

On 1 June 1941 Eden had a private meeting with Pope Pius XII in Rome, during which he expressed ‘the surprise, concerned and deep worry of his country.’¹³⁷ After this

meeting, Osborne wrote to the Foreign Office that there had been no agreement between the Vatican and Germany:

He [the Pope] expressed the opinion that, in any case, Vatican Radio was not permitted to reach the ears of the Polish people and of other populations under Axis dominion and that such populations were subjected to retaliations for the overly explicit language (of the station).¹³⁸

The next day Monsignor Tardini, secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastic Affairs, produced a report of the meeting which he had been given by Pope Pius XII:

His Holiness received yesterday the minister of England who complained at great length about the silence of *Radio Vaticana* and gave the Pontiff a note. The Holy Father explained that there had been no agreement, commitment, or promise by the Vatican to the Axis powers. But it could not be ignored that German Catholics and religious peoples had been the victims of serious retaliations by the Nazi government. It is not mandatory that the Vatican radio station must talk every day about what happens in Germany.¹³⁹

Finally, Cardinal Maglione sent an official reply from the Vatican dated 28 June, 1941. This formal statement took into account how *Radio Vaticana*'s broadcasts had at times been used and embellished by other sources that were interested in furthering their propaganda objectives at the expenses of *Radio Vaticana*:

The Holy See cannot allow that an initiative destined to enlighten and lead Catholics serve the propaganda to confuse them and separate them, nor (can it allow) that such propaganda colour *Radio Vaticana* with a biased approach it has never had which would cause serious consequences for the religious people and the faithful Catholics of many countries.¹⁴⁰

As was stated earlier, the British government pretended to be the Vatican station and attributed various false news reports and commentaries to it. This is confirmed by a

note written by Sir Alec Randall on 21 July, 1941, just two months after the official communiqué of the Vatican:

The Vatican radio station has been of great usefulness to our propaganda and we exploited it fully. No other neutral power in reality could have persisted for so long in giving us useful material and in risking violent criticisms from powers with which it (the Vatican) maintains normal diplomatic relations.¹⁴¹

From that moment until the end of the conflict, *Radio Vaticana* limited itself to more generic, factual accounts of the global situation among other discussions of a more theological nature. Even these broadcasts were considered hostile, however, and the Nazis made every effort to censor them either in print, from the pulpit, or through jamming. Pope Pius XII's words condemning of the war could not be perceived by the Germans in any other way. The Italian government, as well, strictly censored of programmes emanating from *Radio Vaticana*. Between 1941 and 1942 it downright prohibited the airing of any message of peace, including the Christmas broadcast of 1941 and the message of Pius XII on 13 May 1942, to celebrate his Episcopal jubileum.¹⁴² A note from the Minister of Popular Culture Pavolini clearly denotes the attitude of the Italian government toward the Pope: 'Non ci frega piu' (He is not going to screw us any more).¹⁴³

Radio Vaticana also concentrated on developing and expanding the *Ufficio Informazioni*, a special service that aired increasingly longer lists Italian prisoners of war and their messages to their families. This was a laborious and lengthy task due to various difficulties of a technical and diplomatic nature. German, Italian and Spanish authorities could, once again, only be displeased to hear the lists of names of their soldiers captured

by the enemies get longer and longer as they lost control of the war. *Radio Vaticana's* work subtly undermined Nazi and Italian propaganda about their victory.

As the war intensified and Italy's position changed from precarious to invaded and eventually defeated, the Vatican and its radio station tried to survive. The fall of Fascism and the establishment of the Badoglio government were not reported on *Radio Vaticana*. The diplomatic position of the Vatican was very difficult after Germany invaded Rome, and it remained dangerous until the liberation. *Radio Vaticana* needed to be cautious about possible Nazi retaliation in the face of the fall of Mussolini's government. However, on 1 September 1943, Pope Pius XII, particularly shaken by the bombings and Nazi brutality, aired an explicit message about the moral responsibility of peace and a hard message against those responsible for the war. On the fourth anniversary of Hitler's invasion of Poland, Pope Pius XII declared:

Those who then reckoned on swift war operations and a speedy victorious peace, now see around them, inside and outside the Motherland nothing but grief and contemplate nothing but ruins.¹⁴⁴

It seems apparent that the Pontiff was referring to Hitler's initial statements regarding Germany's victory over Poland. The Pope went on to state:

Woe to those who in this terrible moment do not reach full awareness of their responsibility for the fate of the peoples, who feed hatred and conflicts among them, who build their power upon injustice, who oppress and torment the unarmed and innocent.¹⁴⁵

Finally, Pope Pius XII denounced the brutal methods of "total war" and Hitler's record of "so many torn-up treaties, so many ignored conventions, so many broken promises, so many contradictory changes in feelings and action", ending with the hope that the year may end in peace.

Other than the Pontiff's broadcast, the nine months of the German occupation leading up to the liberation were a period of hibernation for the Vatican radio station. News reports were practically non-existent, while the service for war prisoners was very active together with commentaries on the Pontiff's actions. By 1944 *Radio Vaticana* was facing the same reality as EIAR would face shortly after the fall of the interim government, the Socialist Republic, that is, the imperative to rebuild the technical infrastructure and to reconstruct the identity of its voice and mission.

The collapse of Fascism

On 10 July 1943 Anglo-American forces landed in Sicily. The loss of the island was the decisive factor in the collapse of Fascism. Shortly thereafter Mussolini was forced to resign as Prime Minister and was later imprisoned. On 12 September 1943 the Germans freed him and helped him establish the Italian Socialist Republic in Northern Italy. Following the disintegration of Fascism, a new government was formed under the guidance of Marshall Badoglio, the conqueror of Ethiopia. It was he who, on 8 September 1943, announced over the radio that an Armistice had been signed with the Allies. Two days later the EIAR installations in Rome were occupied by the Germans.¹⁴⁶ Later the same day, newspapers published a letter of agreement between the Italian government and the Germans:

...on the basis of an agreement decided at four o'clock today, 10 September, the EIAR centre will be handed over with no impediments. The behaviour of the staff will be proper and will avoid hostile actions. Should the Germans request technical assistance in the restoration of the equipment the staff will offer full cooperation.¹⁴⁷

From this moment until the liberation of Rome and the final defeat of Fascism,

EIAR was controlled by the Germans. Despite the Fascist promise of cooperation a letter written by the Ministry of Popular Culture to the president of EIAR noted that, ‘...after 8 September a deplorable absenteeism inside EIAR has rendered extremely wearisome and difficult government action with regards to radio propaganda...’¹⁴⁸ In the meantime, Southern Italy had been liberated by the Allied Forces and was witnessing a period of relative tranquillity. EIAR’s southern stations of *Palermo*, *Bari*, and *Napoli* fell under the control of the United States Army’s Psychological Warfare Branch; despite this, those working in the Italian stations experienced a sense of camaraderie with the Allies that were born out of their common hatred of Fascism.

For over two decades, “il Duce” had been in power, almost creating a myth of invincibility among many. For some, accepting the idea that the “Fascist Empire” had collapsed was a bitter pill to swallow. In a very short time the whole structure of Fascism, which was supposedly designed to bring Italy together, had crumbled. Between the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943, the Germans, once allies, had become enemies, and Mussolini, symbol of what should have been a new Italian nation founded on order, class equality, economic prosperity, and imperialism, had also been destroyed. Italians were left with a war ravaged nation, a failed ideology and anger at dictator’s unrealized promises. They were also left with the difficult task of reorganizing Italy’s political, economic, and legislative life, and rebuilding its cities, industrial complexes and communication infrastructure.

By the end of 1943, Italian radio had undergone a tremendous amount of change. The Fascists still held some precarious control of broadcasting in the North with the help of the Germans, while in the South the Americans exploited the propaganda potential of

local radio broadcasts by Italians. When the national communication system was re-established it would confirm the status quo, a state monopoly, in the 1947 Broadcasting Act.

NOTES

- ¹ The Ente Italiana Audizioni Italia or EIAR was the state-owned broadcasting company.
- ² The correspondence between the Vatican and Britain collected by the Foreign Office for example highlights that relations between the Holy See and the British diplomatic corps were friendly.
- ³ Monteleone, F. (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio, p.100.
- ⁴ The state's news agency.
- ⁵ Loc. cit.
- ⁶ Its programmes in medium wave were re-broadcasted from Rome in short wave in order to reach the largest possible audience. MacDonald, C. (1991). "Radio Bari: Italian wireless propaganda in the Middle east and British countermeasures 1934-38". *Middle Eastern Studies*. 195-207.
- ⁷ Loc. Cit.
- ⁸ Cheap radio sets produced by the Nazi regime for mass distribution designed to only receive German stations, according to *The Goebbels Diaries:1939-1941(1982)*. New York: Penguin Books, p.22.
- ⁹ MacDonald, C. (1991). "Radio Bari: Italian wireless propaganda in the Middle east and British countermeasures 1934-38". *Middle Eastern Studies*. 195-207.
- ¹⁰ Monteleone, F. (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio, p. 126.
- ¹¹ Loc. cit.
- ¹² Isola, G. (1998). *L'ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo 1924-1944*. Milano: Bruno Mondadori Editore, p. 351.
- ¹³ Monteleone, F. (1992). *Storia della Radio e della Televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio.
- ¹⁴ Radio Truth.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, p. 350.
- ¹⁶ Loc. cit.
- ¹⁷ Silvestri Silvana . *Ascolta la tua Radio. Il Manifesto*, 25 April 1995.
- ¹⁸ The Special Operations Executive (SOE) was a war organization created by Winston Churchill and Hugh Dalton in July 1940. Also known as Churchill's secret army, the organization was dedicated to risky espionage missions across enemy lines as well as on being the foundation for domestic resistance efforts. The propaganda division was called *Department EH*, later to be removed from the SOE to become the *Political Warfare Executive*.
- ¹⁹ "La radio e i giornali, quando parlano di voi, vi chiamano 'i gloriosi feriti'. Non sono parole queste, dette così per dire. In queste parole gli Italiani ci mettono veramente tutta l'anima. Siete nostril, così come siete delle nostre famiglie; e' come se vi conoscessimo uno per uno, anche se non vi abbiamo mai visti materialmente; e quando vi si chiama gloriosi, non e' per fare della retorica... 'glorioso' significa, questa volta, qualcosa di profondo, di intimo; siete gloriosi perche' siete semplici, avete combattuto da buoni soldati, e nelle carni giovani avete sentito a un certo momento come un coplo violente, e poi e' uscito il vostro sangue. Quello che le madri e I padri chiamano 'sangue mio'". Palmieri, F. (1941). *Radio Igea. Saluto ai feriti di guerra*. Radiocorriere , 17, n.7, p.11. In Isola, G. ((1998). *L'ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo 1924-1944*. Milano: Bruno Mondadori Editore, p.355.
- ²⁰ "La propaganda inglese e' balorda, perche' troppo bassamente bugiarda; ma quello che e' peggio e' di una vilta' senza precedenti, di una miseria moral che non puo' essere giustificata da niente, da nessuna ragione di Stato, da nessun calcolo, da nessuna astuzia; e' fango ignobile e inutile. Perche' I bugiardi a stipendio della propaganda anglo-giudaica hanno osato recare un'offesa senza nome a questo popolo nostro, da cui sieti usciti voi, e I combattenti, e i caduti. Hanno osato pensare con viscida e idiota malvagita' che questo popolo onesto... possa rinnegare, per qualche sacrificio in piu' e qualche vicenda di guerra piu' dura, tutta la sua vita, il suo onore, la sua fede". Ibid, p.357.

²¹ The laws called for prohibiting Jews from teaching in schools, and from marrying so-called Aryans. In addition foreign Jews living as refugees in Italy were taken to internment camps, much like the Japanese-American internment camps.

²² The tragic historical episode is called "the round-up". In October and November 1943 the SS army began rounding up the Jews and taking them first to Italian-run internment camps such as the *Fossoli di Carpi* and *Bolzano* camps; periodically, they would then move them to Auschwitz. Other assembly cities were Mantua, Milan, Borgo San Dalmazzo, while La Risiera di San Sabba also served as a transit internment camp in the northeast to deport Jews to Auschwitz.

²³ "Come se gli Italiani non fossero impastati di volonta', di lavoro, di sacrificio e di sete di bellezza, di verita', di giustizia; come se gli Italiani, stretti intorno al Duce da sempre non fossero gente capace di dire 'prima di arrivare a toccare un ditto di questo nostro capo che e' tutta la nostra giovinezza ed il nostro orgoglio, si dovrebbe passare sul rogo di questo popolo". Loc. Cit.

²⁴ Ibid, p.372. .

²⁵ Loc. Cit.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 373.

²⁷ Silvestri Silvana . *Ascolta la tua Radio. Il Manifesto*, 25 April 1995.

²⁸ Isola, G. ((1998). *L'ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo 1924-1944*. Milano: Bruno Mondadori Editore, p.374 -375.

²⁹ Italy Fights. For a longer discussion of this programme please see chapter 6.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 373.

³¹ This radio station was in direct competition with the other *Radio Bari* set up by the British.

³² Ibid, p. 373-374.

³³ The Centre for Anti-Communist Studies was directly under the supervision of the Inspectorate. It was designed as a place of research of the cultural and economic aspects of Russian society, which would spearhead the propaganda efforts aiming at highlighting the contradictions and evils of such society. Isola, G. (1990). *Abbassa la tua Radio Per Favore: Storia dell' Ascolto Radiofonico nell'Italia Fascista*. Firenze: La Nuova Editrice Scandicci, p.236-237.

³⁴ Loc. cit., p. 237.

³⁵ Union and Liberation Party.

³⁶ "...L'immaginario partito...si propone is seguenti scopi: riunire gli elementi sparsi e confusi dell'opposizione sovietica e incitarli alla organizzazione attiva (come in effetti pare stia avvenendo); criticare violentemente la politica interna ed estera di Stalin; dimostrare, sulla base di fatti reali, il fallimento ideologico del bolscevismo e la pochezza, in confronto degli altri paesi, delle realizzazioni sociali sovietiche; effettuare la penetrazione della dottrina del Fascismo nel USSR, imperniando il programmema dis ricostruzione della *Sojuz Osvobozdenija* sulle idee fondamentali della nostra rivoluzione. In Isola, G. (1990). *Abbassa la tua Radio Per Favore: Storia dell' Ascolto Radiofonico nell'Italia Fascista*. Firenze: La Nuova Editrice Scandicci, p. 237.

³⁷ The conspiracy was another (the Protocols of the Elders of Zion being a prime infamous example) deceptive propaganda concept formulated by anti-Semites who proclaimed to have so-called "evidence" that "proved" Jewish control of world finance, politics, and diplomacy. Among the main Jewish objectives would have been to cause wars in which Christians died so that the Jewish people could achieve complete world domination.

³⁸ "Guardiamo tutta la storia del comunismo. La piu' grande classe della Russia era la classe contadina, il piu' grande lavoratore il contadino...che cosa ha fatto il comunismo per il contadino russo? Lo ha aizzato contro i proprietari dei terreni, contro l'intelligenza perche' era difficile ingannare queste classi istruite. Poi li ha divisi in gruppi e li ha iazzati fra loro...Mentre che I Russi si distruggevano tra loro i comunisti hanno organizzato, con l'aiuto dei capi ebraici l'apparecchio del potere, e hanno incatenato tutto il popolo. Adesso soltanto gli imbecilli non vedono che il nome 'potere dell'operaio e del contadino' e' una derisione. Il potere in realta' e' interNazionale con capi ebraici e il popolo e' trasformato in bestiame da lavoro". Barberito, M. (4 August 1938). *Testimonianze*. In Isola, G. (1998). *L'ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo 1924-1944*. Milano: Bruno Mondadori Editore, p.378-379.

³⁹ The poet Ezra Pound also became a fervent follower of Fascism. In 1924 he moved to Italy and began to make a series of radio speeches that exalted Mussolini's ideology. He eventually returned to the United States in 1945 and was arrested for such broadcasts on charges of treason. However, he was found to be mentally ill and was not imprisoned for treason.

⁴⁰ “Sembra essere un assioma in America che gli Stati Uniti devono per dovere Nazionale aiutare la Gran Bretagna in questa guerra in tutti i modi...la risposta ci e' fornita da uno scrittore Americano, Quincy Howe in un volume pubblicato Quattro anni fa, ma non affatto superato oggi, intitolato *England expects every American to do his Duty*...egli sostiene che non e' la forza della Gran Bretagna che costituisce un pericolo per gli Stati Uniti, ma la sua debolezza, e fa rilevare i molti sintomi di decadenza dell'impero britannico che da due decenni sta mandando messaggi SOS agli Stati Uniti per salvarlo dal disgregamento”. Villari, L. (1941). *Come la Gran Bretagna ha sfruttato l'America*. In Isola, G. (1998). *L'ha Scritto la Radio: Storia e Testi della Radio Durante il Fascismo 1924-1944*. Milano: Bruno Mondadori Editore, p. 381-382.

⁴¹ “La cooperazione fra le organizzazioni radio americane e la British Broadcasting Corporation e' ugualmente significativa. Il 25 marzo 1937 la National Broadcasting Corporation of America dedico' un'ora al tema: 'E' possibile una sistemazione mondiale?' Gli oratori furono l'inglese Lord Elton, che disse che mentre la Societa' delle Nazioni dovrebbe mantenere la pace in Europa, la Gran Bretagna e gli Stati Uniti dovrebbero mantenere quella nel mondo...tutti convennero che l'isolazionismo Americano era follia, e che il primo dovere del cittadino americano era di sacrificare la sua vita per l'impero britannico”. Ibid, p. 383-384.

⁴² “Le idee di Quincy Howe di una politica Americana continentale non sono affatto in contrasto colla politica dell'Asse di una comunita' continentale europea. Se il popolo Americano riflettesse sull'idea del Howe e agisse in base ad essa ci dovrebbe essere invero la possibilita' di una cooperazione fra I due concetti per uno scopo commune, che e' la giustizia. Disgraziatamente questo non e' lo scopo dei bellicisti in America o in Inghilterra, che sono in istato di ferocia isterica cercando sempre nuove vittime da sbranare”. Ibid, p. 386.

⁴³ “La guerra si e' trasformata in una crociata ideologica dell'Europa Cristiana contro i bolscevichi, atei e negatori del Vangelo...la propaganda Fascista si dimmetta forse di tutte le polemiche che avevao fatto guardare con sospetto alle gerarchie ecclesiastiche il suo sorgere e diffondersi”. Loc. Cit. p., 400.

⁴⁴ “Questo soldato ha difeso e difende, con l'azione, la fede dei suoi padri e della sua terra. Egli e' partito per la guerra, silenzioso e operante crociato, dalla divisa disadorna e dall'anima vicina veramente al suo Dio. Non e' possibile alterare questa verita', come non e' possibile fraintendere la parola del Vangelo”. Palmieri, F. (1942-43). *I soldati della fede*. Ibid, p.400.

⁴⁵ “Davanti alla furia dei russi, negatori di Cristo, alla gelida mania materialistica degli americani e degli inglesi, non ci sono a fermarli che i petti dei soldati; e, con gli atri, in primissima fila, quelli dei soldati italiani. A questi petti e' affidata la difesa e la sopravvivenza della Patria e quindi della sua stessa fede religiosa. Per questo, o cappellani, la Vostra croce si leva nelle battaglie come segno d'amore e come bandiera d'incitamento...a Dio e' offerto questo esempio semplice e grande, e' offerto al cuore e al destino della Patria”. Ibid, p. 401-402.

⁴⁶ Rendina reports a curious story, the “Tisserant mystery”, surrounding the death of Pope Pius XI. In 1972 *Paris-Match* and the Italian weekly magazine *Panorama* published a memo allegedly written by Cardinal Tisserant which claimed that Pius XI had been murdered because Mussolini was afraid of being excommunicated. Cardinal Confalonieri, special secretary to Pope Pius XI, stated that it was all nonsense. Yet the mystery remains and may be brought to light with a careful scrutiny of Pius XI's secret archives, which were opened in September 2006. So far, nothing significant regarding this point has been revealed. No date has yet been given by the Church for the opening of the archives relating to Pope Pius XII. Pope Benedict XV, predecessor to Pope Pius XI, died in 1922 and his archives were opened by Pope John Paul II in 1985, sixty three years later. Following the same time calculations the secret archives of Pope Pius XII probably will not open until 2021. In Rendina, C. (1999). *I Papi: Storia e Segreti*. Roma: Newton & Compton Editori, p.794.

⁴⁷ Loc. cit.

⁴⁸ Loc. cit.

⁴⁹ Blet, P., S.J. *Pius XII and the Second World War* (1997), New York: Paulist Press; Cornwell, J. *Hitler's Pope*, (1999), New York: Penguin Books.

⁵⁰ Marazziti, M. (1990). *I Papi di Carta: Nascita e Svolta dell'Informazione Religiosa da Pio XII a Giovanni XXIII*. Genova: Casa Editrice Marietti, p.6.

⁵¹ In 1939-1941 *L'Osservatore Romano* grew in prestige and circulation, reaching up to 150,000 copies a day. Such success is attributed to the growing sense of collective mistrust on the part of the Italian people for the Fascist government. Many times in fact, the Catholic publication became prey to the attacks of the

Fascist media. The following excerpt is worth quoting since it highlights this point with painful accuracy. The Fascist *Mare nostro-Stirpe Italica* of 4 February 1940 stated: "The newspaper of a tiny foreign state, in very close proximity to our Rome, *L'Osservatore Romano*, of Vatican City, has exceedingly increased its readership; in the coffee shops, the subway, the railway, the theatres one sees...faces that don't appear very Catholic and apostolic immersed in the literature of the very Christian Vatican paper. Piteous and Jews, members of the bourgeoisie and members of the Fascist party since 1932, have they all suddenly converted to genuine Catholicism?...These swines read *L'Osservatore Romano* because they believe they will find in its pages the "truth": those non Fascist or even anti-Fascist truth that so fills them with joy. The Catholic newspaper of Vatican City has too many readers, and they must be carefully monitored". In *ibid*, p.8.

⁵² Alvarez, D., Graham, R. (1997). *Nothing Sacred: Nazi Espionage Against the Vatican, 1939-1945*. Great Britain: Frank Cass Publishers, p.140.

⁵³ Graham, R. (1976). *La Radio Vaticana tra Londra e Berlino: un Dossier della Guerra delle Onde, 1940-1941*. In *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 127, I, 132-150.

⁵⁴ The British operated "Radio Christ the King" which broadcast into German territory. Its main voice was, supposedly, an Austrian refugee priest who spoke at length against Nazism; according to Graham, "British agents assiduously spread the story in neutral capitals that Radio Christ the King was a Catholic station operated by Vatican Radio...because of such propaganda operations by the Allies, the German-language service of Vatican Radio repeatedly warned its listeners to beware of fraudulent Vatican broadcasts".

Alvarez, D. nd Graham, R. (1997). *Nothing Sacred: Nazi Espionage Against the Vatican, 1939-1945*. Great Britain: Frank Cass Publishers, p. 144. Regretfully, Father Graham is not precise regarding the exact period of operation of Radio Christ the King. I was unable to find Father Graham's reference.

⁵⁵ "Si presentarono come Radio Vaticana anche trasmettenti clandestine. Goebbels giuro' di ridurla al silenzio; I membri della resistenza, in Francia, trascrivevano laboriosamente le sue trasmissioni spesso appena percettibili e ne distribuivano clandestinamente i testi stampati. Così ebbe I suoi apostoli, ma anche I suoi martiri. Cattolici e non cattolici, in Germania e altrove, vennero imprigionati per aver ascoltato la voce del papa', per non parlare di molti innocenti colpiti dalle rappresaglie della Gestapo per trasmissioni vaticane che non avevano mai ascoltato". Graham, R. (1976). *La Radio Vaticana tra Londra e Berlino: un Dossier della Guerra delle Onde, 1940-1941*. In *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 127, I, 132-150. p.132.

⁵⁶ Alvarez, D. nd Graham, R. (1997). *Nothing Sacred: Nazi Espionage Against the Vatican, 1939-1945*. Great Britain: Frank Cass Publishers, p.142.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.133.

⁵⁸ "L'Ambasciatore: 'Voi dite che la Radio Vaticana non ha nulla a che fare con la Segreteria di Stato. Ma nessuno vi crede'.

Tardini: 'Eppure e' vero'.

L'Ambasciatore: 'Se io vi dicessi che la Radio Italiana non dipende dal Governo voi non ci credereste'.

Tardini: 'Se lo diceste voi ci crederei'.

L'Ambasciatore: 'Sareste voi solo a crederci'." *Actes et documents du Saint Siege relatifs a la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*. Citta' del Vaticano, Vol. IV, 1967, p.548. From now on this source will be referred to as *Actes*.

⁵⁹ Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In "Chiesa e Società dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano". Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p. 703.

⁶⁰ "In linguaggio moderno questi delitti contro l'umana convivenza assumono questi altri nomi: l'esagerato Nazionalismo, la febbre di egemonia commerciale e politica, l'arbitraria rottura alla parola data, il monopolio delle materie prime, l'asservimento dei popoli, il despotismo e l'uso della violenza". *Ibid*, p. 704.

⁶¹ "In queste condizioni di tempo e di spirito...possa l'imminente festa di Cristo re...essere un giorno di grazia e di profondo rinnovamento e risveglio nello spirito del regno di Cristo. Sia un giorno, in cui la consacrazione del genere umano al cuore divino, la quale deve essere celebrata in modo particolarmente solenne, riunisca Presso il trono dell'Eterno Re I fedeli di tutti I popoli e di tutte le Nazioni in adorazione e riparazione, per rinnovare a Lui a alla Sua legge di verità e di amore il giuramento di fedeltà ora e sempre". *Summi Pontificatus*, pp.2-3.

⁶² "Ma in singular modo Ci sentiamo mossi dall'animo Nostro a far palese l'intima nostra gratitudine per I segni di riverente omaggio pervenuti Ci da sovrani, da capi di stato e da pubbliche autorità di quelle Nazioni, con le quali la Sante Sede si trova in amichevoli rapporti. E a particolare letizia si leva il Nostro

cuore nel potere, in questa prima enciclica indirizzata a tutto il popolo cristiano sparso nel mondo, porre in tal novero la diletta Italia, fecondo giardino della fede piantata dai principi degli apostolic, la quale, mercede la provvideNaziale opera dei Patti lateranensi occupa ora un posto d'onore tra gli stati ufficialmente rappresentati Presso la sede apostolica. Da quie Patti ebbe felice inizio, come aurora di tranquilla e fraterna unione di animi innanzi ai sacri altari e nel consorzio civile, 'la pace di Cristo restituita all'Italia'. Ibid, p.4.

⁶³ "Non meno dannoso al benessere della Nazioni e alla prosperita' della gente e societa' umana, che raccoglie e abbarccia entro I suoi confine tuttel le genti, si dimostra contenuto in quelle concezioni, le quali non dubitano di sciogliere l'autorita' civile da qualsiasi dipendenza dall'Ente Supremo, causa prima e Signore assoluto sia dell'uomo che della societa' e da ogni legame di legge trascendente, che da Dio deriva come da fonte principale e le concedono una facolta' illimitata d'azione, abbandonata all'onda mutevole della volonta' umana o a soli dettami di esigenze storiche contingenti e di interessi relative". Ibid, p. 9.

⁶⁴ "Considerare lo Stato come fine, al quale ogni cosa dovrebbe essere subordinate e indirizzata, non potrebbe che nuocere alla vera e durevole prosperita' delle Nazioni. E cio' avviene sia che tale dominio venga attribuito allo stato, quale mandatorio della Nazione, del popolo, o anche di una classe sociale, sia che venga preteso dallo stato, quale padrone assoluto, indipendente da qualsiasi mandato". Ibid, p.10.

⁶⁵ "E quale scandalo piu' dannoso alle generazioni e piu' duraturo di una formazione della gioventu' mal diretta verso una meta che allontana da Cristo, 'via, verita' e vita', e conduce ad un'apostasia manifesta o occulta da Cristo?...La concezione che assega allo Stato un'autorita' illimitata non e', venerabili fratelli, soltanto un errore pernicioso alla vita interna delle Nazioni, alla loro prosperita' e al maggiore e ordinate incremento del loro benessere, ma areca altresì nocimento alle relazioni fra I popoli, perche' rumple l'unita' della societa' sopranNazionale, toglie fondamento e valore al diritto delle genti, apre la via alla violazione dei diritti altrui e rende difficile l'intesa e la conviveza pacifiche". Ibid, p.11.

⁶⁶ "...Staccare il diritto delle genti dall'ancora del diritto divino, per fondarlo sulla volonta' autonoma degli stati, significa detronizzare quello stesso diritto e togliergli I titoli piu' nobili e piu' validi, abbandonando all'inafausta dinamica dell'interesse private e dell'egoismo collettivo tutto intento a far valere i propri diritti e a disconoscere quelli degli altri...il considerare I patti per principio come effimeri e l'attribuirsi tacitamente la facolta' di rescinderli unilateralmente, quando piu' non convenissero, toglierebbe ongi fiducia reciproca fra gli stati. E cosi' rimarrebbe scardinato l'ordine naturale, e verrebbero scavate delle fosse incolmabili di separazione fra i vari popoli e Nazioni". Ibid, p. 12.

⁶⁷ Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In "Chiesa e Societa' dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano". Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p.704-705.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 705.

⁶⁹ "Nel mondo, cosi' come e' concepito dal cattolicesimo, non c'e' posto ne' per l'ateismo bolscevico, ne' per il neopaganesimo Nazional-socialista, ne' per alter concezioni della vita sociale in cui un Dio, molto vagante concepito, viene invocato per i propri scopi particolari. Queste strane concezioni della divinita' vorrebbero basare l'idea di Dio, in modo assurdo, o nella stessa material, o nella razza, o nel sangue".

Newscast of 27 November 1939, Arch. Pellegino. Loc.cit.

⁷⁰ A much longer and detailed description of the campaign will be presented later in the chapter.

⁷¹ "La Chiesa e' certamente la depositaia legittima dei diritti divini. Spesso lungo I secoli, ed anche oggi, Ella e' costretta a gridare il suo *non licet*, a questo o quell'Erode redivivo che, in ambiti ben piu' larghi e piu' gravi conseguenze, quali non sono i bagordi d'una vita private, tentano di deluderli o di sopprimerli. Nessuno puo' meravigliarsi se la Chiesa interviene e ripete ad alta voce il *non licet* di Giovanni o il *non pussumus non loqui* di S. Pietro. Ella non paventa ne' il carcere, ne' I tormenti, ne'-ed e' forse il piu' grave-un subitaneo ritorno alle catacombe. Non farlo o cercare dei compromessi sarebbe tradire la sua missione, sarebbe offendere colui che l'ha eletta a Sua Sposa, e ingannerebbe tutti coloro che, delusi dagli uomini e dai loro sistemi, guardana alla Chiesa come all'unico faro, ultima tavola di salvezza, una pietra salda dove aggrappandosi si sfugge all'abisso". 30 November, 1939, "The figure of John the Baptist". In Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In "Chiesa e Societa' dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano". Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p. 705, footnote 53.

⁷² "Conversazioni" or conversations was the title given to such programmes by Radio Vaticana.

⁷³ Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In "Chiesa e Società dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano". Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p. 706.

⁷⁴ "Il modo pare abbia dimenticato il messaggio pacifico di Cristo, e si è notata una serie di atti inconciliabili con le prescrizioni del diritto internazionale positivo e del diritto naturale (aggressione contro un piccolo e laborioso popolo. Atrocità e uso illecito di mezzi di distruzione, disprezzo della dignità, della libertà e vita umana". *Discorsi e Messaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII*. (24 December 1939). Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, I, p.438.

⁷⁵ Ibid, I, p.441.

⁷⁶ "Le Nazioni devono venire liberate dalla corsa agli armamenti e dal pericolo che la forza diventi tirannia violatrice del diritto". Loc. cit.

⁷⁷ "Per evitare arbitrarie e unilaterali lesioni e interpretazioni dei trattati medesimi e d'importanza decisive rivedere e correggere istituzioni giuridiche precedenti". Loc. Cit.

⁷⁸ "...quell senso di intima responsabilità che pondera gli statuti umani secondo le norme del diritto divino". Ibid, I, p.422.

⁷⁹ The mutual interest of both leaders toward establishing cordial relations between the Holy See and the United States is evidenced in a letter written by President Roosevelt to Pope Pius XII on 23 December, 1939, a day before the Pontiff's radio broadcast. Excerpts from the letter are important to note here as they show the bonding of a relationship between the two countries that would reach its climax at the end of the war with the victory of the Christian Democratic Party in the new Italian Republic:

" In their hearts men decline to accept, for long, the law of destruction forced upon them by wielders of brute force. Always they seek, sometime in silence, to find again the faith without which the welfare of the nations and the peace of the world cannot be rebuilt.

I have the rare privilege of reading the letters and confidences of thousands of humble people, living in scores of different nations...I know that these, and uncounted numbers like them in every country, are looking for a guiding light.

I believe that while statesmen are considering a new order of things, the new order may well be at hand. I believe that it is even now being built, silently but inevitably, in the hearts of masses whose voices are not heard, but whose common faith will write the final history of our time. They know that unless there is belief in some guiding principle and some trust in a divine plan, nations are without light, and peoples perish. They know that the civilization handed down to us by our fathers was built by men and women who knew in their hearts that all were brothers because they were children of God. They believe that by His will enmities can be healed; that in His mercy the weak can find deliverance, and the strong can find grace in helping the weak.

In the grief and terror of the hour, these quiet voices, if they can be heard, may yet tell of the rebuilding of the world.

It is well that the world should think of this at Christmas.

Because the people of this nation have come to a realization...that only by friendly association between the seekers of light and the seekers of peace everywhere can the forces of evil be overcome.

In these present moments, no spiritual leader, no civil leader can move forward on a specific plan to terminate destruction and build anew. Yet the time for that will surely come.

It is, therefore, my thought that though no given action or given time may now be prophesied, it is well that we encourage a closer association between those in every part of the world—those in religion and those in government—who have a common purpose.

I am, therefore, suggesting to Your Holiness that it would give me great satisfaction to send to You my personal representative in order that our parallel endeavors for peace and the alleviation of suffering may be assisted.

When the time shall come for the re-establishment of world peace on a surer foundation, it is of the utmost importance to humanity and to religion that common ideals shall have united expression.

Furthermore, when the happy day shall dawn, great problems of practical import will face us all. Millions of people of all races, all nationalities and all religions may seek new lives by migration to other lands or by reestablishment of old homes. Here, too, common ideals call for parallel action.

I trust, therefore, that all of the Churches of the world which believe in a common God will throw the great weight of their influence into this great cause.

To You, whom I have the privilege of calling a good friend and an old friend, I send my respectful greeting at this Christmas season". *Actes*, March 1930-August 1940, Tel. nr. 7 (A.E.S. 9659/39) Edit. *Wartime Correspondence*, 17-19; F.R.U.S. 1939 vol. I, p.871.

⁸⁰ Alvarez, D., Graham, R. (1997). *Nothing Sacred: Nazi Espionage Against the Vatican, 1939-1945*. Great Britain: Frank Cass Publishers, p.140.

⁸¹ For an in-depth discussion of this *Ufficio Informazioni*, the Information Office, please see chapter six.

⁸² "Le notizie che giungono dalla Polonia occupata dai tedeschi, si fanno ogni giorno piu' gravi.

Riservandoci di ritornare sull'argomento in una prossima trasmissione, per ora accenniamo al fatto che le condizioni di vita religiosa, politica, economica, hanno gettato quell nobile popolo, anche nelle regioni occupate dalla Germania, in uno stato di terrore, di abbruttimento e staremo per dire di barbarie molto simile a quello imposto alla Spagna nel 1936 dai comunisti. Uno degli aspetti inumani di tale terrore e' costituito dall'esodo d'interi popolazioni dai loro paesi, destinate ad altre regioni lontane. L'esodo avviene per lo piu' con ordini bruschi e immediate. In poche ore il villaggio o la parte della citta' deve essere sgombrata, ai partenti e' vietato portar seco denaro, biancherie, suppellettili, se non in minima misura; poi vengono cacciati a branci in treni da merce e guardati da soldati. Giunti a destinazione, sempre ignota, i profughi, dopo un viaggio disastroso e spesso allo scoperto sotto la neve, vengono lasciati alla ventura. La fame e le malattie sono quindi il loro retaggio. Tali casi avvengono tutti i giorni". ⁸² Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In "Chiesa e Societa' dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano". Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p. 708.

⁸³ "I polacchi hanno la sensazione che si vuole distruggerli in questo modo. Quanto alla situazione religiosa, dalle relazioni fin qui pervenute, si raccoglie che i tedeschi usano i medesimi mezzi, e forse anche peggiori, degli stessi sovietici. Molte chiese furono distrutte addirittura, o furono chiuse, o profanate. Moltissimi sono anche i casi di inauditi sacrilegi, di fucilazioni, e prigionie durissime di sacerdoti. Le distruzioni di croci e di sacre icone fanno ricordare gli scampati di Barcellona sotto la tirannia rossa. Il servizio religioso, dov'e' permesso, e' limitato alla domenica e solo per due ore. Nella cosiddetta riserva polacca (territorio riservato ai polacchi), regna la piu' squallida miseria, anche perche' quell territorio e' stato il piu' piagato dalla guerra. Questi cenni non danno che una sbiadita idea di quello che e' la Polonia sotto il regime germanico". Loc. cit.

⁸⁴ Alvarez, D., Graham, R. (1997). *Nothing Sacred: Nazi Espionage Against the Vatican, 1939-1945*. Great Britain: Frank Cass Publishers, p.141.

⁸⁵ The *Sonderdienst Seehaus* (Lake House Special Service) was Germany's main agency for monitoring foreign news broadcasts and was run by the propaganda and foreign ministries. The agency monitored 45 countries in 37 languages, recorded the content of the programmes every day and sent copies of it to various government departments. Ibid, p.142.

⁸⁶ The law, *Extraordinary measures regarding radio listening*, is quoted in Graham, R. (1976). *La Radio Vaticana tra Londra e Berlino: un Dossier della Guerra delle Onde, 1940-1941*, p.135.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 135, footnote (4).

⁸⁸ Ibid, p.139.

⁸⁹ Loc. cit.

⁹⁰ One wonders how a "forced immigration" could ever be conducted in a "loyal way".

⁹¹ Written in Polish, it was entitled *Toward Freedom* (1950). Detroit. In *ibid*, p. 140.

⁹² Loc. cit.

⁹³ Loc. cit.

⁹⁴ "Il Santo Padre mi dice che ha disposto a sospendere, per il momento, le trasmissioni. Rispondo augurandomi che...si riprendano presto. Sua Santita' sorride e...conviene". *Actes*, III, 209. In loc. cit.

⁹⁵ For a longer discussion of this, please see page 213.

⁹⁶ 25 January, 1940. *Actes*, III, 209. Loc. cit.

⁹⁷ *Actes*, III, 219. Loc. cit.

⁹⁸ "Vi si dava conto dello scioglimento delle organizzazioni cattoliche per la gioventu, per gli studenti, per le donne, ecc., della soppressione della stampa religiosa e delle scuole, delle intimidazioni verso i cattolici praticanti e di altre restrizioni, per finire con i tentativi destinati ad impedire la distribuzione dell'enciclica programmatica del nuovo papa, *Summi Pontificatus*. La trasmissione rendeva anche noti i particolari di un'istruzione segreta emanata dal partito contro i militari che, tornando a casa dal fronte, si recavano a visitare i loro sacerdoti, 'perche' questi sono nemici dello stato". Loc. Cit., p.140.

- ⁹⁹ The word Nuncio originates from the Latin word *Nuntius*, meaning an envoy. A Papal Nuncio is the diplomatic representative of the Vatican to a specific state, generally receiving the rank of ambassador.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Actes*, I, 403. Ibid, p.140, footnote (15).
- ¹⁰¹ It was published on 24 February, 1940, n. 16.
- ¹⁰² 16 September, 1940. *The New York Times*, p. 5.
- ¹⁰³ Loc. Cit.
- ¹⁰⁴ Loc. Cit.
- ¹⁰⁵ Alvarez, D., Graham, R. (1997). *Nothing Sacred: Nazi Espionage Against the Vatican, 1939-1945*. Great Britain: Frank Cass Publishers, p.143.
- ¹⁰⁶ Loc. Cit.
- ¹⁰⁷ Loc. Cit.
- ¹⁰⁸ Loc. Cit.
- ¹⁰⁹ “Si limiti a riferire i fatti, senza commenti o apprezzamenti, dopo aver lui (Ledochowski) riveduto personalmente il testo”. *Actes*, IV, 207 s. In Graham, R. (1976). *La Radio Vaticana tra Londra e Berlino: un Dossier della Guerra delle Onde, 1940-1941*, p.141. In *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 127, I, 132-150.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid, p.142.
- ¹¹¹ “Il governo Nazista non vuole assolutamente che il mondo venga informato della sua sistematica persecuzione della Chiesa di Cristo”. *Actes*, IV, 210. In Loc. cit.
- ¹¹² “Non esiste in Polonia quella fiorente vita religiosa che lo scrittore vorrebbe farci credere; piuttosto i cattolici hanno gran bisogno delle preghiere dei cattolici di tutto il mondo per essere sostenuti nelle loro prove”. Loc. cit.
- ¹¹³ “Questo ci conferisce il diritto di chiedere ai cattolici grande prudenza nel’ accogliere notizie che non sono in grado di controllare nel tentativo di far loro accettare, con informazioni rassicuranti, dei principi anti-cristiani affermati sempre come tali dai loro stessi propugnatori”. Loc. cit.
- ¹¹⁴ “Il P. Generale dei gesuiti mi dice che ieri la radio Vaticana ha risposto... Egli prevede una levata di scudi, ma aggiunge: 1. che non c’è altro mezzo di difesa che la Radio; 2. che i Nazisti hanno paura della verità più che del cannone; 3. che, anche se la trasmissione è disturbata in una Nazione, è sempre sentita in altre. Basta, del resto, che arrivi in un posto per essere poi conosciuta dappertutto”. *Actes*, IV, 202. In loc. cit.
- ¹¹⁵ *El Alcázar* was a Spanish far-right newspaper founded in 1936.
- ¹¹⁶ “Il Nazionalsocialismo è un movimento religioso fondato sui principi del cristianesimo”. Loc. cit.
- ¹¹⁷ “Perché sia evidente la verità è necessario che le dichiarazioni siano raffrontate con la situazione reale... se il Nazismo è un movimento cristiano perché ha fatto scomparire le scuole confessionali? Perché in Austria i monasteri sono stati confiscati? Perché la lotta al matrimonio cristiano? Nei territori polacchi occupati dai tedeschi si avverte una grave carenza di sacerdoti, eppure 400 preti polacchi sono stati trasportati in Germania... di fronte a tali fatti, come asserire imparzialmente che sono vere le parole dell’editoriale secondo cui ‘il rispetto della Nazionalsocialismo per le organizzazioni religiose è stato dimostrato sia dentro sia fuori del Reich?’”. *Actes*, IV, 239s. Ibid, p.143.
- ¹¹⁸ 20 November, 1940. *The New York Times*, p.1.
- ¹¹⁹ In. Graham, R. (1976). *La Radio Vaticana tra Londra e Berlino: un Dossier della Guerra delle Onde, 1940-1941*, p.143. In *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 127, I, 132-150.
- ¹²⁰ “She” refers to the Catholic Church as the bride of Christ.
- ¹²¹ “Per opportuna conoscenza si comunica che da diversi giorni la Radio Vaticana in una trasmissione in lingua spagnola che ha luogo alle ore 21-21,13 su onda corta di m.80 circa, ha iniziato una serie di conversazioni in cui si attacca violentemente il Nazionalsocialismo tedesco dal punto di vista cattolico... il locutore è un prete che accusa il Nazismo di menare una campagna sistematica contro i cattolici”. *National Archive-Washington, D.C.*
- ¹²² In. Graham, R. (1976). *La Radio Vaticana tra Londra e Berlino: un Dossier della Guerra delle Onde, 1940-1941*, p.143. In *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 127, I, 132-150.
- ¹²³ Ibid, p.144.
- ¹²⁴ *Hitler’s Secret Conversations*, 1941-44. New York, 1953, p. 268.
- ¹²⁵ “Una nuova candela sull’altare della fede è spenta. I repubblicani spagnoli nel chiudere i monasteri davano ai monaci dieci giorni di tempo. Le SS avevano dato solo otto ore. Desideriamo che da questo esempio gli spagnoli si facciano un’idea esatta della situazione della Chiesa cattolica in Germania”. Ibid, p.144.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p.145.

¹²⁷ The history of Alsace-Lorraine is plagued by abrupt changes and repeated invasions. Between 1871 and 1918 the region was under the German Empire, but after the end of the First World War and the collapse of Germany the Republic of Alsace-Lorraine was formed. The new state was short-lived since France re-annexed it only eleven days after its inception. During the Second World War, the area was once again occupied by Germany and in 1945 it was finally given back to France. Both countries attempted repeatedly to eliminate each other's cultural influences in the area, causing some tension between French and German inhabitants.

¹²⁸ Loc. cit.

¹²⁹ "Pensate che la benedizione o la maledizione di Dio per la propria patria potranno dipendere dal modo che voi usate verso coloro che le sorti della guerra pongono nelle vostre mani". *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità' Pio XII*. Tipografia poliglotta Vaticana, III, 39-45.

¹³⁰ Italy had actually only invaded the South of France.

¹³¹ Graham, R. (1976). *La Radio Vaticana tra Londra e Berlino: un Dossier della Guerra delle Onde, 1940-1941*, p.146. In *La Civiltà' Cattolica*, 127, I, 132-150.

¹³² *Actes*, IV, 474, 477.

¹³³ Public Records Office, FO 371/30177.

¹³⁴ PRO, FO 371/24421.

¹³⁵ PRO, FO 371/24421.

¹³⁶ PRO, FO 371/30174. In Graham, R. (1976). *La Radio Vaticana tra Londra e Berlino: un Dossier della Guerra delle Onde, 1940-1941*, p.149.

¹³⁷ *Actes*, IV, 541-543. In *ibid*, p.148.

¹³⁸ PRO, FO 371/30177. In *ibid*, p.149.

¹³⁹ *Actes*, IV, 543. In *loc. cit*.

¹⁴⁰ "Ne' poteva, la Santa Sede permettere che un'iniziativa, destinata ad illuminare e dirigere i cattolici, servisse alla propaganda precisamente per confonderli e dividerli, ne' che delle manovre intraprese dalla propaganda medesima nell'intento di attribuire alle emissioni della Radio Vaticana un carattere parziale ch'esse non hanno mai avuto, dovessero essere proprio i religiosi e fedeli di molti paesi a portarne le dure conseguenze". *Actes*, IV, 583-585.

¹⁴¹ PRO, FO 371/30180. In *ibid*, p. 150.

¹⁴² Alberto Monticone (1979). *La Radio Vaticana tra Fascismo e Guerra, 1931-1944*. In "Chiesa e Società' dal Secolo IV ai Nostri Giorni. Studi Storici in Onore del P. Ilarino da Milano". Roma: Italia sacra, 31, p. 720.

¹⁴³ ACS, *Min. cult. pop.*, b. 107, fasc. 7. In *Loc. Cit*.

¹⁴⁴ 1 September 1943. For the anniversary of the beginning of the war. *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità' Pio XII*. Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, V, 119-122.

¹⁴⁵ *Loc.Cit*.

¹⁴⁶ Chiarenza, F. (1978). *Il Cavallo Morente: Trent'Anni di Radiotelevisione Italiana*. Milano: Bompiani, p.14.

¹⁴⁷ "In base all'accordo stabilito alle 16,00 di oggi, 10 settembre, la sede dell'EIAR dovrà' essere consegnata senza ostacoli di sorta. Il contegno del personale dovrà' essere corretto e si dovranno evitare atti e manifestazioni ostili...se d'arte germanica fosse richiesto di concorrere alle operazioni tecniche di ripristino del funzionamento degli impianti, dovrà' essere prestata la collaborazione occorrente". A letter to the head of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Popular Culture, 10 September, 1943. In Monteleone, F. (1979). *Storia della RAI dagli Alleati alla DC, 1944-1954*, p. 21, footnote 41.

¹⁴⁸ "...dopo l'8 settembre un assenteismo deplorabile e significativo si e' contrapposto nell'ambiente dell'EIAR allo zelo dimostrato nei 45 giorni, rendendo estremamente faticosa e penosa l'azione del governo nel campo della propaganda radiofonica la cui importanza e' del tutto superfluo che illustri". A letter by the Ministry of Popular Culture Mezzasoma to the president of EIAR Giancarlo Vallauri. In Chiarenza, F. (1978). *Il Cavallo Morente: Trent'Anni di Radiotelevisione Italiana*. Milano: Bompiani, p.15.

CHAPTER SIX

SILENCE ON THE AIRWAVES: THE END OF THE FASCIST RADIO EXPERIENCE AND THE LIBERATION OF ITALY, 1943-1945.

‘Attention! Attention! His Majesty the King has accepted the resignation...of Prime Minister Benito Mussolini and has nominated as Head of Government ...Marshal Pietro Badoglio...’

Giovan Battista, EIAR speaker

The arrival of the Anglo-Americans forces in Sicily marked the beginning of the liberation of Italy from the Fascists and from Nazi Germany. For the first time since 1922 the nation was on the path of democratization. While the Allied presence was undoubtedly instrumental in aiding the process of recovery and the emergence of the pluralist party system, the initial hopes for a complete change in the bureaucratic and administrative structure of Italy never really occurred. State-owned broadcasting was always a mirror of the national events, this instance being no exception. Therefore, although the Monarchy and Fascism were eliminated as political forces by 1946, the *Ente Italiana Audizioni Radiofoniche* (EIAR) was left resolving problems of political, legislative, economic and administrative control. Indeed, for the next forty years, the broadcasting company was to become the battleground for information control by the various dominant interest groups present in Italian politics.

The liberation of Italy from Fascism had a significant impact on the Catholic Church. Once Mussolini was rescued by the Germans and taken to Northern Italy to form the Socialist Republic, Pope Pius XII's cooperation with the Allied forces became more open, as demonstrated by the Vatican's refusal to honour the Concordat between the church and the now semi-defunct Fascist state. The years immediately following the end of the Second World War witnessed the increasing influence of the Catholic Church

in the Italian republic, a pervasive power that was aided in its expansion by the United States and the new Christian Democratic Party led by Alcide De Gasperi. *Radio Vaticana's* mission as the voice of the Pope continued and expanded, now including an even more fierce opposition to atheist Communism and to all those in Italy and abroad who supported the policy of the U.S.S.R. By the election of 1948 and the victory of the Christian Democratic Party the Church had officially secured its place as a key player in the political life of the nation.

Italy under the Allies

The Kingdom of the South was the Allies' first attempt to create a new, semi-independent Italian state. However, the British and the Americans had disparate opinions on how to handle the dynamics of the occupation. Since 1942, the British had demonstrated their unwillingness to recognize the possibility of finding in Italy or abroad a leader capable of organizing an anti-Fascist movement, probably due to two main reasons: on one side London's long standing complete distrust of Italians, due to Italy's African and Middle Eastern imperialistic efforts, its naval challenge to British dominance in the Mediterranean and its alliance with Hitler; on the other, and perhaps most importantly, the British refusal to cooperate with the Italian Communists, who represented the majority of the Resistance forces in Italy and abroad. This is evident in a letter sent by the Foreign Office to the American State Department: '...At the moment, there aren't in Italy neither a leader nor a movement of the kind, and neither are there, outside of Italy, people capable of assuming such a role...'¹ Within the U.S. State Department though, there were those who believed it would be beneficial to aid the anti-Fascist groups. This was probably due to the large Italian population in the United

States. Contrary to British opinion, there were non-Communist groups in Italy and abroad which were actively involved in the fight against Fascism.

The best recognized organization of Italian anti-Fascists was based in New York after the fall of France. It was named the *Mazzini Society* after Giuseppe Mazzini, one of the leading figures in late 19th century Italian unification, and it included representatives of all the major political parties as well as those who were not affiliated with any specific ideology, Count Sforza being the primary exponent. As early as 1941, Sforza himself had prepared a programme based on eight essential points for the rebuilding of Italy as a democratic Republic. In August 1942, the group met in Montevideo, Uruguay, for the *Congress for Free Italians* in which it was unanimously agreed that Italy should adhere to the United Nation's cause as well as draft a Constitution for the new state.² These wishes never materialized because British goals were to impose an unconditional surrender upon Italy and re-establish its Monarchy which, interestingly, was not related to Queen Victoria.

Italian political parties which had been dissolved after the 1922's Fascist coup had started organizing again clandestinely and communicating with each other. The result was the creation of the *Committee of National Liberation for Northern Italy*, or CLNAI, in the areas still occupied by the Germans: '...In the moment in which Nazism tries to restore in Rome and in Italy its Fascist ally the Committee of National Liberation is established to call Italians to ...the Resistance to re-conquer Italy's place among the free nations....'³ The CLNAI in cooperation with the Partisan's Resistance movement, composed of many groups of various political orientation, brought about the first official industrial strikes against the Fascist regime.⁴ While it was not considered an alternative

government, it was respected by the Allies as the only legitimate representation of the anti-Fascist forces in Northern Italy.⁵ In the South however the role of the CLN (*Committee of National Liberation*) was very different as it did not enjoy much representation. The main components of the CLNAI in Northern Italy were members of the Communist and Socialist parties and the Anglo-Americans wanted to limit their sphere of influence in the South as much as possible. Moreover the Allies recognized the Badoglio government as the only *de jure* Italian political power. Therefore in the South the CLN, even though created by the political groups which would eventually be on the forefront of the new Italian state, was at the time recognized by the Allies only as an organization limited to having some administrative utility.⁶

President Roosevelt's intent had been to follow the Wilsonian principle of self-determination for those countries freed from Nazism.⁷ Even though Italy had been an enemy of the Anglo-Americans for most of the war, Roosevelt considered it a freed country and its people a victim of the Fascist regime. This assumption was reinforced by the welcome the Allies received when they arrived in Sicily: 'Sicily had not really resisted; the people had welcomed the English and the Americans as the liberators; the armies had for the most part dissolved or they had surrendered without a fight...'⁸ Carlo Levi, best known for his depiction of primitive Italian society in *Cristo si e' Fermato a Eboli*, possibly reflecting a general attitude, would also write that the Americans were welcomed and perceived almost as co-nationals because among its troops were sons of Italian-American immigrants. He observed that for the Italian people, obsessed by war and famine, the Americans were regarded as a Godsend. Levi stated that he had never seen, '...in the houses of the peasants a portrait of the King, Mussolini or even

Garibaldi...but to have always found, next to the picture of the Virgin Mary, a portrait of Roosevelt...'⁹ His sentiments were echoed by other Italian writers and historians, including Aurelio Lepre, and can also be seen in the accounts of the warm welcome given by the Italian people to the Allies' armies. The strong influence of the Catholic Church also played a significant role in the increasing bond of trust between America and the Italian people, in part because of the significant role of the Church in the United States.

In the end, the American concept of self-determination was applied to Italy and expressed by the Under-Secretary of State Adolf Berle in a speech given on 23 November 1943:

...we haven't used the strength of the American army, destined to fight the Nazis, to impose the institution of political governments improvised against the will of the population...since we have trust in the kind and cordial European people, we can serenely let them decide their type of freedom...following other routes would be to deny the essential democracy which exists within us...¹⁰

Despite their differences in approach, both the United States and Great Britain recognized that it would be sometimes necessary to intervene in the occupied countries to avoid the risk of a civil war.¹¹ In practical terms, when after 25 July, 1943 the Anglo-American forces faced the possibility of a long term military occupation of Italy, they decided against it by agreeing that 'it would have been too risky to occupy a country in complete anarchy and chaos.'¹² Churchill expressed his concern that, if the Allied forces ruled Italy, they would soon be held responsible for the people's maintenance and for their problems. Therefore, '...the liberators would be soon considered tyrants and they would be hated by the Italians as much or almost as much as the Germans.'¹³ It became therefore the Allies' intention to keep in Southern Italy a facade of government, which is exactly what King Emmanuel II at first and the Badoglio government successively

fulfilled. The Kingdom of the South was the result of these objectives and paved the way for the beginning of a new Italian political life and the emergence of the party system.

The Germans had moved EIAR headquarters from Rome to Turin in the North, while in the *Kingdom of the South* radio was under the control of the Allied *Psychological Warfare Branch* (PWB). The PWB was useful in helping the print Press expand its newspaper production. Radio communication also had a key role in anti-Fascist propaganda,¹⁴ supporting the creation of a new moderate government which would be loyal to the Monarchy.¹⁵ The Monarchy was initially supported to maintain institutional continuity and to keep Italy from falling to Communism. The British were very concerned about avoiding a fracture in, ‘...the legislative and political continuity of the State which could cause a change in the understanding of the unconditional surrender.’¹⁶

...on one side the Monarchy, supported by the Allies, on the other side the anti-Fascist forces, determined not to cooperate with Victor Emmanuel and Badoglio, but unable, because of the Anglo-American presence, to impose more advanced solutions....¹⁷

The Allies were not the only ones wanting to ensure continuity with the King and Marshal Badoglio, for the Italian aristocracy and the Church also shared the goal of maintaining their traditional power and defeating the Communist threat. However, it is also true that before the complete liberation of Italy most anti-Fascist forces were concentrated on destroying Fascism and the Germans. Therefore, despite different ideologies regarding the governing of Italy, they shared one common denominator, the expulsion of the Germans and the elimination of Fascism.

Italian broadcasting during the occupation

Immediately before and after the Armistice, radio was the only source of information for the Italian people. *Radio Bari*,¹⁸ the medium-wave station located in the heel of the Italian boot, which had prewar broadcast to the Middle East an aggressively anti-British message, became the crucial link between news of the war and the rest of the population in a nation divided by the war between the occupying Germans and the Allied forces.¹⁹ The key figures behind *Radio Bari* were a group of anti-Fascist intellectuals who managed to air their broadcast independent of allied control for about one week. Eventually, on 16 September, 1943 media in the *Kingdom of the South* was put under the control of Major Greenlees, British Political Warfare Executive (PWE), who recalled:

My intent was to leave complete freedom of opinion and choice. The job was done almost exclusively by the Italian anti-Fascists and I would coordinate it. I believed it necessary to stimulate the mind after twenty years of darkness and silence, to create the basis for a democratic country.²⁰

Even if the control of the American Psychological Warfare Branch over radio was stricter than the British PWE Major was willing or able to admit, which it was in many instances, comparatively it was still much more bearable than the censorship endured during the Fascist years. Anti-Fascist broadcasts were intended for the Italians who still lived under the grips of the Nazis in the North. In addition, it was crucial for the Anglo-Americans that the Italian people view them as their liberators. Finally, there was a need to counter the Nazi propaganda against *Radio Bari*, nicknamed by German-controlled EIAR 'radio shame.'²¹ The immediate post-war phase of 1943-1944 was a period of hopes and enthusiasm, and radio intellectuals were on the forefront of this wave of change.

The difficult task of restructuring and reorganizing radio communication was well-understood by the Allies. They designed a Press Office under the control of the Psychological Warfare Branch to oversee radio activity in the South, while the Press was allowed more freedom. The specific tasks of such office had been defined in the Armistice papers signed in Malta on 26 September, 1943. Interestingly, this part of the agreement was initially kept secret. The intent was, as Italy's support for the allied forces would grow, to diminish the strictness of the clauses. Article 16 of the document dealt specifically with the control of communication:

No radio station or any other kind of long-wave communication, on earth or at sea, under the Italian control, whether it belongs to Italy or to another nation not part of the United Nations, will be allowed to broadcast until specific orders for the control of such stations will be given to the Supreme Command of the Allied Forces. The Italian authorities will conform to the orders regarding the control and the censorship of the print Press and of other publications, theatrical or cinematographic representations, radio diffusion and any other type of communication media prescribed by the Supreme Command of the Allied Forces. The Supreme Officer of the Allied Forces will have the authority to, at his own discretion, take over radio stations...or any other communication media.²²

The first step toward the reconstruction of radio taken during the Badoglio government was based on Article 16. As the first Prime Minister succeeding Mussolini, Badoglio created a Ministry of Communications under the supervision of Minister Sandalli. The goal of this new entity was to accelerate the reconstruction of communication through the elimination of the type of bureaucracy which had been characteristic of the Fascist era. However, the goal was difficult to attain because every broadcast required a series of authorizations and agreements between the PWB, the Supreme Command of the Allied Forces and the Press Office. As a result, despite

various attempts to change it, radio communication was once again controlled through administrative bureaucracy. Historian and journalist Franco Monteleone noted that, '*Radio Bari* had the character of a military institution, obedient to the wishes of the Allies'.²³ However, despite the control, it was through *Radio Bari* that the first programmes were designed which were based on a more democratic format.

The majority of those now working for *Radio Bari* were anti-Fascists, many of whom had been in jail for their political beliefs. In addition to them, and despite the efforts of the Badoglio government to keep them out, there were some brilliant members of the opposition parties namely the Communists and Socialists along with minor political parties. While the Americans did not really understand Socialism, the British Labour Party certainly did; regardless, despite different political ideologies, for the most part, Italian journalists felt a kinship with the Allies based on the common hatred of Fascism and an eager desire to cooperate with the Allies that was doubtlessly instrumental in facilitating the initial developing of good relations between the Anglo-Americans and the emerging political forces:

They were for the most part journalists, writers, politicians eager to contribute to the resurrection of the Italian state, but all of them would come to the English and the Americans proud and happy with what they had achieved and trusting of the welcome that was awaiting them. The risks suffered had distanced them from the awareness of the war which had just ended, and quickly had introduced in their souls a sentiment of brotherhood with the men against which they had fought...²⁴

Despite the Anglo-American propaganda present in the Southern Kingdom's radio, these intellectuals were experiencing freedom for the first time in twenty years. The end of Mussolini's dictatorship gave them an unprecedented feeling of autonomy and enthusiasm which caused them to overlook perhaps, at least in the beginning, the

continued Allied control. On the other hand, they probably recognized that this period of transition was very much needed in the crucial phase of reconstruction of Italian broadcasting.

Some further radio restructuring occurred in the fall of 1943 when the *Press Office* was transformed by the Badoglio government in the *Commissariat for Information* under the direction of Antonio Vetturini. The goal of this transformation was, on the surface, to eliminate some of the Allied military control of radio. In reality however, control remained.²⁵ In November of the same year the Ministry of Communications created an *Under-Secretaryship* to expand Italian independence with regards to communications. The Allies were not yet ready to give Italy much control over its radio programming. Their goal was twofold: on one side to maintain complete control over communications with the cooperation of the Italians, broadcasting programmes fostering anti-Fascist propaganda in German-occupied Italy; on the other aid the Resistance movement by providing important military information. These legal steps were taken primarily to show to the Italian people that their new government was working toward democracy and that the Allies were willing to gradually increase the autonomy of Italian broadcasting.

A good example of this type of programme was *Italia Combatte* (Italy Fights), the most famous military programme of the time. Initially broadcast only from *Radio Bari*, and as the Allies advanced up the peninsula, it later began transmitting from *Radio Napoli* and, after the liberation, *Radio Roma*. The contents of the show were quite liberal politically but conformed to Allied policy.²⁶ *Italia Combatte* started with the *Bollettino della Guerra Partigiana in Italia* (Bulletin of the Partisan's War in Italy) which offered

military news and, occasionally, some brief editorials. In this part of the programme the Allies' propaganda strategy of unconditional surrender was strongly evident, as it is shown in this excerpt from one of the shows:

The Allied Military Government [AMG]...does not occupy itself with the political activities of Italy, outside the fact that it will never enter into negotiations with the Fascist traitors. Its goal is to help the Italian people, in its entirety, without paying attention to their political affiliation, in the efforts for the reconstruction. All this must be continually kept in mind. Patriots and citizens of the freed Italy, of this or that party, which would expect to make the AMG their ally for the realization solely of their interests, would be facing disappointments.²⁷

The propaganda intended to reassure the Italian people of the good intentions of the Anglo-Americans. But the more interesting part of the programme, in line with the British PWE strategy, included fake correspondence to discredit the enemy and offered valuable information about the German army and espionage activity. Overall the objectives of the PWB were on one hand to control the Allies' image in Italy and to foster anti-Fascist propaganda; on the other hand to set the basis eventually for the creation of a democratic information infrastructure.²⁸

Despite their efforts otherwise, during 1943 and the summer of 1944 Italy's Press and radio were not particularly successful in giving the people a feeling of safety and security for two primary reasons. First, the information system was passing through the same transition stage as the rest of the country. Therefore it was not realistic to think that, given the historical situation radio and the Press could show great stability. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, there was political ambiguity amongst and within the Allies administrators. For instance some officers in the British occupation army, such as Major Greenlees, were more open to the creation of an Italian government

of national unity than they should have been according to official British or American policy. Greenlees was deeply familiar with the Italian culture and language; this might be the reason why he was not opposed to the idea of a government of national unity, unlike the general policy of the British occupation authority.

The so-called Congress of 1944 among all the *Committees of National Liberation* (CLN) was particularly significant in understanding the conflicting forces within the Americans and the British. The Congress of 1944 was viewed with apprehension by the Allies who feared that prominent politicians in the opposition parties would continue to criticize publicly King Emanuel II, accusing him of being the culprit for the advent of Fascism. The Americans, however, were not as favourable to Marshal Badoglio and the Monarchy. The main Italian parties that had been forming in Italy were hoping to be allowed to create a government of national unity composed of all the parties which were part of the *Committees of National Liberation* (CLN). Churchill himself expressed his discontent in a speech given to the House of Commons on February 22, 1944:

...Churchill observed that the United Nations had signed the Armistice with the government of the King and of Marshall Badoglio; that following the orders of such government the Italian army had been supporting the United Nations and was fighting with them; and that he was doubtful that another government could obtain the same discipline...²⁹

The pragmatic Churchill was apparently uncomfortable with the possibility of an Italian government which could undermine the British commitment to unconditional Italian surrender as well as include the Communists, which would have been totally unacceptable.

The hopes of the Italian parties were not going to materialize until April 1944. In the meantime, British Field Marshall Alexander forbade the radio broadcasting of the

proceedings of the Congress; however on a personal initiative of Major Greenlees, most of the speeches were recorded and passed over to the BBC which, exercising its long-standing reputation of independence, broadcast them on *Radio Londra*, its overseas short-wave service to Italy. Despite the differing political approaches of London and Washington, the Allies contributed to the political and communication stabilization of Italy. By the end of 1943 the main parties of the newly re-created Italian state already existed, such as the Christian Democrats, the Communists and the Socialists.

The birth of the multi-party system

The *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC) had been born in 1942, when there had already been a metamorphosis in the public's perception of Mussolini.³⁰ Pope Pius XII had shown his concern regarding the political situation of Italy in 1942; on 25 December he had spoken to comfort and support the population at an extremely difficult time when Italy, under constant allied bombing and with its North African Empire destroyed, was on the verge of defeat. After the defeat of the Papal political power by the Risorgimento in 1870, Italians—the vast majority Roman Catholic—continued to regard the Pope as a crucial point of reference. The 1929 Concordat between the Church and the Italian state codified the new relationship of a politically independent Vatican State with the Church's control over education. The war increasingly pushed the limits of that Church-State relationship. As Lepre points out, from 1942 on the Pope assumed a role that was spiritual and political.³¹ In his speech on 25 December, 1942 Pius XII had exhorted Catholics all over the world to reorganize themselves politically and get involved. It is important to note

that Christian Democrats had a series of advantages compared to the other Italian parties which made it 'particularly suited to be *the* party of the institutions and of the state':³²

...It had, thanks to the Church, an important social base, particularly in the Catholic regions of the North-East and in the South. Its Catholic ideology could appeal to both middle classes and lower classes. It had always given great importance to local associations and local movements as well as to a variety of forms and organizations. It was thus well implanted in Italian society. Ideologically it was not committed to any particular form or state or to the dominance of private forms of ownership. It could thus attract support from different sources. It could be anti-Communist without being totally committed to a capitalist-liberal system. During the Fascist period the political personnel of the Liberal State had either been co-opted by the regime or had been repressed by it. The Church, however, had been allowed a relative degree of autonomy. Thus the only political organization which had emerged from Fascism with competent political personnel was the DC.³³

On July 1943, the Christian Democrats published their platform, *The Reconstructive Ideas of the Christian Democracy*³⁴ which included basic elements of economic reconstruction as well as an in-depth discussion of the country's social problems. Initially, the main goal of the DC's ideology was the creation of a middle class, achieved through the access to ownership with a series of economic reforms.³⁵ The document also dealt with the 'reconstruction of the international order'³⁶ to create a new international community. Other points included: progressive international disarmament, free access to the resources of the former colonies also including unrestrictive emigration, and the formation of a world military force to replace national armies.³⁷ In following years culminating with the 1948 elections, the DC, under the leadership of Alcide De Gasperi, gained prestige and support from the Italian population at large.

After the end of the war in 1945, the party faced several strategic options; De Gasperi was able to find a successful solution to ensure the dominance of the party. In the process, he had to:

Defeat the attempt to transform the DC into a clerical party which would be subject to the dictates of the Church and ...prevent the success of the Dossetti group which sought to develop an original Catholic-Populist line with unmistakable anti-capitalist traits...at the same time he had to ensure that no overtly pro-capitalist liberal party could gain popular support.³⁸

In terms of economic development, De Gasperi was aware that he had to promote the "free-enterprise system" and social reforms, while at the same time preventing the Communist party from gaining the support of the urban working class as well as the rural poor, historically badly exploited by large land owners. In its first manifesto, the DC had wanted to pursue the concept of de-proletarianization. Eventually however De Gasperi decided to aim for '...creating a complex stratification in Italy by political-economic means so that the division of the labour force in a variety of strata would prevent the formation of a large politically united factory proletariat.'³⁹ In other words the main goal of the DC was to defeat the *Partito Comunista* (PCI). The genius of De Gasperi was to be able to:

Combine what may appear to be a 'backward' ideology (traditional Catholicism) with a practical concern for the modernization of Italy. The anti-Communism of the DC is not simply the reflection of the traditional Catholic values; it is also an instrument which is used to create a demarcation line between those who can participate and those who cannot participate in the DC system of political mediation.⁴⁰

The Church did play a fundamental role in helping the DC grow as it is evident in the decree passed by Pius XII five years after the war, on July 8, 1949, in which the

Church proclaimed its opposition to 'materialistic and atheistic Marxism' by excommunicating all those who 'Professed Marxist ideas or were active in Communist parties.'⁴¹ But the Church alone would not have been enough to ensure the DC's success. Part of the appeal was in the fact that, after the initial re-assessment of the political life in the post-war years, both the Italian middle class and the aristocrats and industrialists saw a convergence of interests in the Catholic Party. The upper classes were made of those people whose support of the Monarchy had been self-interested and who had now turned their support to the DC which seemed just as interested in maintaining the *status quo*, which had benefited them during the Fascist government. The moderate middle class, eager to grow and prosper according to a more right-wing American lifestyle popularised by Hollywood movies, rightly feared Communism and wanted a guarantee of economic stability and political control of the future. It had the example of the expansion of society-style Communism into Eastern Europe, the opening of the Cold War, and the fall of the Iron Curtain.

The DC was viewed favourably by the British and the Americans for many reasons. After initially supporting the continuity of the state with the Monarchy and Marshall Badoglio, the Allies became concerned about losing the support and enthusiasm of the Italian masses by imposing a form of government too close to the Fascist era, a strategic error which would have been exploited by the Communist party. An Anglo-American position emerged which supported that the DC was the only party which could have given a guarantee against Communism. The only other alternative could have been the Socialist party (PSI)⁴²; however that solution was quickly abandoned:

The Socialists, whom the Americans had thought of approaching in 1945 and 1946 about the possibility of collaboration, must have felt discouraged by the conservative line that the most powerful American exponents in Italy seemed to prefer. As a result, they were attracted by hopes of neutrality or by pro-Communist solutions.⁴³

Overall, the Christian Democratic Party seemed to offer all the qualities needed at the time for a leading party, including the reassuringly safe traditional Italian values. There could not have been a more perfect combination of interests fusing into one party.

On the other hand the left-wing parties had been particularly active in the fight against Fascism as early as 1922, and during the Second World War. The head of the Communist Party (Italian – PCI), Palmiro Togliatti, had close links with the Soviet Union which the Anglo-Americans obviously and rightly distrusted, although up until 1945 the official Allied-Soviet position was friendship and cooperation. The PCI had been popular in the North among the Partisans and had dominated the Resistance against Fascism. The party's goal was to: 'establish on the ruins of Fascism and Nazism a new constitutional, social and political order'⁴⁴ (e.g. a Marxist-Leninist state). Moreover, as historian Satti states, the Communist-led Resistance in the North:

Carried...a world of new values from which, on the day of the victory, should have risen a new order in the moral, political and social field, capable of closing definitely the road to Fascism and of setting the modern society on solid democratic and progressive basis.⁴⁵

However after July 25, 1943 and before the Armistice the Communist groups had been plagued with unsuccessful attempts to organize themselves in one, truly organic party:

After July 25, while in the large centres of the North it was easy to, under the control of the administrative office, form single organizations in every city...in the centre and in the South the meeting of the various groups...happened with crisis

and contrasts. Particularly difficult was the problem of giving a single political direction to the party given the semi-legal conditions of the moment, without the possibility to form great assemblies and without freedom of the Press. While the administrative office was promoting a policy of national unity, almost all the other groups with which it was in contact were very sectarian and for this reason they could not understand or approve the political initiatives taken by the centre.⁴⁶

The Communist party was having a difficult time uniting, as it can be seen by the breakdown of the percentage of its members between Northern and Southern regions:

Emilia Romagna (North)	9.3%
Sicily (South)	less than 2%
Campania (South)	less than 2% ⁴⁷

The higher percentage in the North can be attributed in part to the fact that the Committees for National Liberation of Northern Italy created in 1944 were also active in the reorganization of the new Italian state and, while acquiring great popularity in the North, they were mainly dominated by the left. In the South however, partly due to the Anglo-American presence, the PCI had been only marginally successful in gaining the support of the peasant population with the promise of obtaining the much agonized rights over the land.

During the period of the Resistance in the North, historians have tried to explain why the Italian Communists did not try to achieve a complete socialist transformation of the country. Several possibilities are suggested. Togliatti opted against the idea of a "revolution of the masses" in Italy because the population was hungry and exhausted. Italians wanted stability, not a civil war. Furthermore the Partisan movement was weak, counting approximately 200,000 men and 35,000 women who could fight concentrating mainly in Northern Italy. Although the estimated number of Resistance partisans is not

insignificant, their biggest problem was that they were not one group. The common denominator of agreement was the hatred of Fascism, but this seldom translated into unity in action. Stalin, careful not to alienate its western Allies in Italy, did not approve of an Italian revolution. Moscow preferred to concentrate its efforts on consolidating the power acquired in Eastern Europe⁴⁸ instead of tackling an area of such geographic and political importance for the British and the Americans. Since 1943, the Allies had been well-aware of this, as it is shown in a report of the Research and Analysis Branch of the American Office of Strategic Services, or OSS:

It has been thought that the physical remoteness of Russia from Italy has led the Russians to consider this country outside their sphere of interests; if so it does not appear likely that the Communists would wish to endanger the unity of the United Nations at the present critical juncture in favour of a policy which, if it exists, would bear fruits only in the comparatively distant future.⁴⁹

Therefore a more moderate line of conduct was preferred which called for the progressive stabilization and strengthening of the country and a later take over by the Communist party:

The Resistance had been a stage in the ' anti-Fascist revolution '. The next stage was not to be Socialism but the creation of a ' new type ' of republic in whose organization the working class would have the ' leading ' role. Instead of a momentous revolutionary rupture, there would be a ' progressive democracy '. Italy's road to Socialism would be gradual and would not follow the pattern of the Russian Revolution.⁵⁰

In his own words, Togliatti declared,

International experience teaches us that in the actual conditions of the class struggle in the whole world, the working class and the advanced masses, in order to reach Socialism, that is, in order to develop democracy to its extreme limit,

important media for the parties to publicize political positions.⁵² Radio remained under Anglo-American control.

On April 21, 1944 the second Badoglio government was formed including representatives of all the major political parties which had been originally members of the *Committees for National Liberation*.⁵³ The British were persuaded to accept that a government of national unity could actually work because this time the proposal came from all political positions, the moderate left, centre and the more conservative right. During the Communist conference held in Naples in March 1944, Togliatti had spoken about the need to form a new government whose unified purpose would be to fight the Germans with the cooperation of all the parties. A few days later, a similar proposal was brought forth by Benedetto Croce⁵⁴ and Carlo Sforza. Italy had not yet been totally liberated, therefore all the parties, despite different political ideologies, remained united in wanting the complete defeat of Fascism. This attitude of cooperation by the political groups that were members of the CLN made it possible for them to achieve credibility in the eyes of the Allies. As a result, the first government of national unity was created before the liberation of Rome. King Victor Emmanuel II abdicated in favour of his son Umberto;⁵⁵ the new government was installed in Salerno and would last fifty days.

Prime Minister Badoglio was succeeded by Ivanoe Bonomi who formed a new government⁵⁶ with the primary aim of creating a Constitutional Assembly to work on the formulation of a democratic Constitution for the new Italian state.⁵⁷ The Bonomi government was an important step for Italy because it was the first time since the end of the war that the prime minister was someone who did not have such close links with Mussolini as had Marshal Badoglio. However, the government was eyed with suspicion

which is precisely that of Socialism, must discover new paths different, for instance, from those which had been chosen by the working class and the labouring masses of the Soviet Union.⁵¹

The Italian Communists opted for a line of conduct which was apparently independent from Stalin's expansion. Togliatti's goal for the PCI was to gain a place in the new government and establish a relatively strong voice of opposition. This would last until the beginning of the Cold War when the PCI was going to be expelled from the government as a result of the 1948 elections, excommunicated by the Catholic Church and criticized by the Soviet Union for having followed an extreme policy of compromise. From that moment onward, the Communist party would be consistently excluded from successive coalition governments by the De Gasperi's Christian Democrats. In following years, despite attempts to reach an historical compromise between the DC and the PCI, the inclusion of the latter in government never materialized. In later years, the man who could have acted as a successful mediator, Aldo Moro, was assassinated by terrorists in 1978, a period in which Italy experienced its worse wave of terrorism. Eventually the PCI stopped trying to compromise with the Christian Democrats but tried instead to create a 'democratic alternative', a government without the DC, a strategy that also failed to bring about the changes desired by the Communist leaders.

By February 1944 the liberated areas of Italy had returned to the control of the Italian government. Moreover, the governor of Sicily, Charles Poletti gave the local political parties the freedom to publicize their platform. A new Allied Commission was created to substitute the old Control Commission. Finally, the Italian government was given authority to control the publishing of newspapers and magazines, which became

by the British who were afraid that it might soften on the demand of unconditional surrender. The Americans however viewed the situation differently: ‘...the British...still view the people and the government of Italy as a defeated nation which surrendered unconditionally...we...took seriously the state of co-belligerence of Italy.’⁵⁸ Nevertheless, despite objections and suspicions, Italian political life was rapidly developing.

Italian broadcasting after the liberation

After the liberation of Rome in June 1944, all the capital's radio stations were brought under the expanding control of the Psychological Warfare Branch. Many journalists and writers who had left Rome during the occupation started returning. The first official measure taken by the Allied forces to give back to the Italian government the control over radio broadcast happened in July 1944. The Allies set up a new Commission in Rome for broadcasting of central and southern Italy to replace the Allied Commission.⁵⁹ They nominated an Italian, Luigi Rusca, to become the Extraordinary Commissioner of EIAR. Full control of radio management by the Italian government would not be realized until 1947. However, problems over the political control of radio had emerged much earlier. Although since the middle of 1944 the Southern Kingdom's EIAR had been broadcasting a daily fifteen minute programme dedicated to allowing all the parties to express their ideologies, the fight over the control of radio had just begun. The Bonomi government and its successors faced the extremely difficult task of creating a political, administrative and legislative context for the former Fascist broadcasting company.⁶⁰ The next episode is significant in understanding the difficulty of the problem.

In November 1944, EIAR's Administrative Council had discussed a proposal to transfer to the *Under-Secretaryship of Press and Information* the tasks that had been assigned to the *Ministry of Popular Culture* during the Fascist era, once again trying to maintain administrative continuity between the Fascist government and the new one.⁶¹ The *Ministry of Posts* had proposed instead that the control over the management of EIAR be put under its ministry while creating a *Commission of Vigilance* to supervise the programming and artistic aspects of radio broadcasting.⁶² The *Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications* offered a perfect example of the struggle of control over radio. The *Under-Secretary of the Office of Press and Information* Giuseppe Spataro however fought back by writing a letter to the Prime Minister rejecting every argument raised by the *Ministry of Posts*:

If the initiatives of EIAR were suppressed, if many programmes lost originality and interest, that depended in great part on the propaganda systems of the only party, but in a non irrelevant measure also to the cultural ignorance...of a 'scientist', a 'technician' of radio diffusion who...would have understood only the technical side of radio. The formative function of radio, its great ability to inform, the help that radio gives to the knowledge and developments of the domestic and international political life, constitute sufficient reasons to justify the necessity of a univocal discipline which would start from a specific administrative and political organ, to be technically subsidized by a special technical department, to attain different aims for a common goal...The task of incrementing the artistic radio phonic production, the coordination in the compilation and in the presentation of the programmes, their improvement and political adaptation, the organization of programmes in foreign languages...cannot and must not be absorbed by a ministry of technical character such as that of Posts and Telecommunication.⁶³

The Presidency of the Council agreed with Spataro, probably in part because he was a prominent member of the Christian Democratic Party and could ensure an even tighter control of the communication media. The *Office of Legislature* was assigned the task of preparing a proposal for the creation of a *Committee of Vigilance* to ensure government control over radio broadcasting. This request was supported by the political parties in the coalition government which were hoping that a government-elected committee would be beneficial to their individual causes, especially in the case of the ever-growing Christian Democratic Party:

...the necessity to have, within the Under-Secretaryship of Press and Information, a Committee of Vigilance for the coordination and the control of radio programmes. In fact, radio mirrors the varied life of the nation and among the listening masses its voice takes on a character of collective responsibility which is missing from any other forms of communication.⁶⁴

The statement leaves no doubt about the desire for control of radio by the government. The concept of 'collective responsibility' was purposely left undefined, and yet the paramount importance of radio and its ability to influence the masses was clearly recognized. Radio was still the most powerful propaganda tool available and the dominant party clearly wanted to use it to further its goals. The intent of the state was emphasized even further by the Ministry of Internal Affairs' granted request to have one of its representatives within the Commission. Finally, in 1944 Bonomi created a second government from which the Socialists were excluded. For the first time since 1943 the left wing was divided and weakened.

The creation of the *Commission of Vigilance* was eyed with suspicion by the employees who saw it for what it truly was, namely another attempt to tighten the grip of

political control over EIAR. Their union's response indicated strong doubts about its impact: 'It is our opinion that such a measure would threaten to suppress the initiative of those who work in radio programmes.'⁶⁵ The diversification of power in EIAR between 1943 and 1945 had caused some inevitable internal tensions among the employees. Specifically, after the liberation of Rome and the Anglo-American takeover of the capital's radio stations increased tension had been present between the old EIAR employees who had been with the state-owned company during the Fascist years and the new employees who were brought into EIAR by the PWE and PWB. The former were still attached to the old bureaucratic system while the latter had learned that radio could be used with a relative degree of freedom from government interference. This tension was never overtly manifested, but was nevertheless present and affected the management and the internal relations for various generations.⁶⁶ Some of the new employees who may have been openly opposed to the regime had no respect for the EIAR collaborators who had worked under Mussolini and in many cases had been members of the Fascist party.

In July 1944 the Sforza Decree attempted to punish legally those who had been actively involved in Fascism as well as those who had aided the Germans and Mussolini after 8 September, 1943. Unfortunately, the decree did not achieve what it had intended to do because it was conceived unrealistically. Had it worked, it might have sent the entire Italian ruling class to jail, paralyzing the reconstruction of Italy; while Germany, for instance, had returning exilers like Willy Brandt, Italy lacked that political advantage because of the the slow transition into Mussolini's Fascism, which was much less radical than the Nazis. Arguably, Badoglio himself might have been taken to trial since he had

demonstrated open opposition to Fascism only when it had become apparent that it was going to be defeated. The population became increasingly concerned that, since those truly responsible for Fascism could not be touched, the only victims of the decree would be those who had the least amount of responsibility.⁶⁷ The Sforza Decree remained unimplemented. Even though it is possible that some truly positive changes in the ruling classes may have come had the decree actually been implemented, this was not the case and the status quo remained in effect. EIAR mirrored once again what was happening in the country. Most of the old functionaries and employees that had actively cooperated with Fascism remained at their old jobs. This phenomenon can be discussed on two levels. On one hand the continuation of management and workers inside the company helped to set in stone the administrative continuation between the status quo and the new RAI. On the other hand, the new governments could not have deprived the company of so many experienced employees without risking a complete breakdown of the reconstruction process.

On 26 October 1944 with Decree N. 457, EIAR changed its name to *Radio Audizioni Italia* (RAI).⁶⁸ At this time also, the Commissariat Regime for Central and Southern Italy was abolished. Moreover the Committee of Liberation for Northern Italy (CLNAI) nominated Enrico Carrara to manage radio organization in Northern Italy. Between April and December 1945, despite the liberation of the whole country which took place on 1 May 1945, radio management remained divided between the northern regions, under the control of Carrara, and the central/southern regions, now under the control of RAI. On 1 October 1945, the first radio network among the three northern radio stations of Milan, Genoa and Turin was created. Luigi Rusca continued as RAI

Commissioner until 1945, when the first Administrative Council of RAI was established.⁶⁹

Decree Nr. 457 was passed at a time when the political, legislative and fiscal future of RAI was precarious. The ambiguity within RAI was due to the lack of specific administrative tasks within the company as well as undefined responsibilities to several ministries. Perhaps this ambiguity was purposely maintained by the DC to further its interests and to secure its control before any official measure would be taken. Luigi Rusca had repeatedly attempted to obtain from the Prime Minister more specific legislature. Rusca wrote a letter to Prime Minister Ivanoe Bonomi in which he expressed his frustrations at RAI's present conditions:

Your Excellency, I apologize for writing directly to you, but I have pursued all other possible alternatives without any success. I still have not been able to discover under which Ministry RAI operates, since I find myself being contested by the Ministries of Communications, Public Instructions and by the Under-Secretaryship of Press and Information...I beg your Excellency to resolve this problem because without a solution many activities of this entity remain paralyzed.⁷⁰

It was not until 20 January, 1945 that a reorganization of radio took place. On that day Luigi Rusca was named by the Bonomi government Commissioner for the extraordinary management of RAI until the election of its first Administrative Council. The technical aspects of radio diffusion were passed from the Ministry of Communications to the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications; the political management was instead given to the Under-Secretaryship of Press and Information.⁷¹ This management was supposed to last for six months; however Rusca was forced to resign by pressures from within RAI before the end of the term because of antagonism

among RAI employees towards former Fascists. Since most of the ex-Fascist EIAR employees were allowed to remain at their old jobs in RAI, Rusca's demise was exceptional. This episode is important because it shows that, despite the eventual defeat of their requests for a complete purging from RAI of all ex-Fascists, employees were putting behind them twenty years of blind obedience. In fact they had, immediately before the Liberation, requested that the Administrative Council be elected from people who did not belong to 'any interest of political or capitalistic groups.'⁷² Employees organized an Internal Commission and wrote to Prime Minister Bonomi, hoping to influence the restructuring of radio:

...The Internal Commission, in the name of all the workers in radio it represents, points out the necessity that, within radio, there should be capable managers, who must operate with competence, understanding the needs of the employees and according to a sincere adherence to the principles of a well-understood democracy...⁷³

After the forced resignation of Luigi Rusca on 20 April 1945 and a few Fascist political hacks, RAI's first Administrative Council was created: Carlo Arturo Jemolo was elected president, Armando Rossini, suggested by DC's De Gasperi, as managing director, Antinori, Caselli, Carocci, Manganelli, Passante, Protto, Tagliatela as directors. Following the liberation of Italy in 1945, radio was still divided in two networks, even if legislatively they were both part of RAI. The first Administrative Council faced the extremely difficult task of technically rebuilding radio, almost completely destroyed by Allied bombing and ground fighting. RAI's President Jemolo had repeatedly tried to interest the government in financing the restructuring of radio without achieving much success. In terms of technical reconstruction, compared to before the war, the condition

of radio was very serious. Before 1943 EIAR had 35 medium-wave transmitters with a total power of approximately 850 Kilowatts and of 11 short-wave transmitters of 680 Kilowatts. After the war the medium-wave stations still functioning were 12 at a total power of 130 Kilowatts; finally, there were only two short-wave stations still in operation at 90 Kilowatts. After the liberation among the reactivated radio equipment were the new stations of Santa Palomba in Rome (100 Kilowatts), Turin (10 Kilowatts), Naples, Florence, and Cagliari (5 Kilowatts each).⁷⁴

On 20 December 1945, during a RAI's General Assembly the Commissariat Regime for Northern Italy was abolished. Jemolo was reconfirmed President and Enrico Carrara was nominated Managing Director, merging the two systems. By this time, radio stations throughout Italy had been connected in two separate networks: one for Rome, Naples, Bari, Catania and Palermo; another for Turin, Milan, Genoa, Bologna, Venice, Padoa, Verona and Bolzano.⁷⁵ RAI had no finances to rebuild in part because it could not collect radio license fees from the Italians facing more serious problems of survival. Even so, the fees would have been completely inadequate to cope with rapidly rising inflation.⁷⁶ Another financial problem was the impossibility of selling radios due to their high cost and the condition of SIPRA, the national advertising associate company, which had been experiencing considerable financial difficulties.⁷⁷ Despite all these problems inside RAI employees still enjoyed a pervasive feeling of autonomy which was a reaction to the Fascist "centralism" of the past two decades. In the words of a journalist:

...We had the feeling of great autonomy in the choice of programmes, in the cultural content and in the line of programming which we were intentioned to

pursue...After the Fascist centralism it was enough for us to know that we could decide everything, or almost everything, by ourselves.⁷⁸

The perceived autonomy was present mainly in the management of RAI.

However it was not going to last long:

...The period after the Liberation had brought for a few years a breath of fresh air in radio and had given to the parties, entities, political and cultural movements, the possibility to have their voices heard through radio; but even then, it was the case of a modification of forces, of men who were saying different things because of the Liberation, but not of a true modification (in the substance of radio). Freedom was exercised for a very short period, the Fascist discriminations were removed, but the steps necessary for a truly structural change indispensable to guarantee the freedom and objectivity of radio were never taken.⁷⁹

The historian Layolo makes the interesting observation that the true metamorphosis of radio had never happened because RAI had always been in a tight rapport with the government instead of the Parliament.⁸⁰ However, as it will be shown in 1947, even the inclusion of the Parliament did not lessen government control over radio:

...what is peculiar about the Italian system is not the lack of effective parliamentary power, but the fact that this power is concentrated in political parties and particularly in one party, the DC, which has always been able to maintain its hegemony.⁸¹

Moreover, by 1947 it was too late to obtain a true representative democracy inside RAI because the initial "resistance" period within the company had given way to a phase of stabilization, normalization and increased control by the dominant party which would last for almost twenty years:

...Therefore radio and television continued in those years to deal with the governments outside the control of the Parliament, to establish contracts and representing the thoughts of those who were in control of the situation...what has

derived...is no clear relationship, the economic balances had never been neither exposed nor put under the supervision of the Parliament, the economic relations between the government and the company were never clarified, neither was any control exhorted by the Parliament...or by public opinion.⁸²

Following the enthusiasm that came after the Liberation, radio featured content that was at times democratic and progressive. Moreover, due to the personal initiatives of local radio stations along with the help of the CLN and the Communist and Socialist parties, management councils had been created in many cities such as Florence, which had exerted a significant influence on programming. However, even before the re-acquisition of radio management by the Italian government, the Allied occupying authorities, in cooperation with the dominant right-wing political forces, had moved to prevent such local control of radio in several Italian cities. Their intention was to create a unified front against the CLN so that, after the Liberation, there would have already been an established block of power which would have benefited the DC.⁸³ Ironically, it was the Christian Democratic Party newspaper, *Il Popolo*, which condemned on 25 November 25 1945 the supposed lack of objectivity of information within RAI. In reality the DC was already acting to stop leftist radio programmes coming from the northern cities in Italy:

We have already deplored the absence of objectivity within RAI, which is especially serious because it is an entity of information of monopolistic character which should, therefore, remain above all this. We cannot avoid noticing that public services should be rendered with serenity and discipline.⁸⁴

This is a good example of the movement of opposition to the prominent Communist-led Resistance. Historian Federico Chabod assessed the main forces that hindered the Resistance:

The military strength of the Allies who control Italy. The Allied Military Administration largely favours the moderate elements, certainly not the 'revolutionary' ones...A strong difference of opinions and attitudes between Northern and Southern Italy...Southern Italy has never known the Resistance...the ties with the Badoglio government have always been tight and steady. The liberation of Rome occurs with the arrival of the Allies and not, like in Genoa, Turin and Milan, with the arrival of the Partisans. Moreover the Pope and the Vatican dominate the whole scene with a power that is much stronger than that of the CLN...⁸⁵

The left lost much of its power to the DC in radio when the autonomy of many northern radio stations was revoked by the government:

The convergence of interests between the ruling bureaucracy of RAI and the new political class which was about to break the unified experience of the CLN was evident and uncontested...the attempts of the radio stations that...were trying to maintain their margins of autonomy in the programming were obstructed from the earliest months.'⁸⁶

By the end of 1945, RAI took over the stations in Milan, Turin and Florence which represented the strongholds of the PCI and PSI. Once those radio stations were also put under the strict control of RAI, they too had to "conform" to the wishes of the dominant party, the Christian Democracy:

The hope for change of the structures of the nation and of those of the ruling class had not happened, everything remained unchanged, the social character did not change but, rather, the archaic methods of the ruling class were absurdly compromising the process of modernization of the state.'⁸⁷

On 21 June 1945 a new government was formed under Ferruccio Parri which represented all parties of the CLN. Ferruccio Parri was one of the leaders of the liberation movement. He had, 'suffered punishment and incarceration for his indomitable

opposition to Fascism during twenty years...the nomination of Parri meant the legalization of the CLN, the recognition of its importance ...and also a hope for a new political path...'⁸⁸ However the Parri government was only to last until December. The reasons for its failure are controversial. At the time the nation was divided between the radical and the moderate forces. Parri was a member of the leftist *Partito D' Azione* (Action Party) which could have potentially acted as a mediating force between political groups. The left-wing parties wanted elections as soon as possible in order to take advantage of the wave of enthusiasm created by the Liberation; the Christian Democrats and the Liberals wanted instead to postpone them for the opposite reason. Eventually Parri could not withstand the pressures coming from the occupying forces and the DC. As a consequence, he was forced to resign:

Parri entrusted the task back to the CLN, denouncing with bitterness the forces that had provoked the withdrawal of the government of the Resistance, the intention of restoring with the old State the same authoritative structures which had adapted to Fascism and illiberal forms of Fascism itself.'⁸⁹

The Parri government could not have lasted given the political situation of Italy. The left had become, 'an uncomfortable companion in the management of political power'⁹⁰ and could not hold a position of such importance in the government. Therefore the nation was left in the hands of the Secretary of the Christian Democratic Party, Alcide De Gasperi.

The 1945 De Gasperi government was seen by many as the beginning of the hegemony of the Christian Democratic Party in the new Italian State. In reality though, it was still part of the CLN coalition and its main achievement was that of acting as a mediating force in the creation of the Italian Republic. De Gasperi found himself in the

difficult position of having to handle the increased demand for a Referendum on whether Italy should be a Republic or a Monarchy. As Prime Minister he was concerned about losing the support of the Monarchists if the DC would have shown to be favourable to the Republic. However, on 17 April, 1946, Luigi Sturzo wrote a letter to De Gasperi in which he urged him to speak in favour of the Republic. Sturzo believed that the majority of the country was Republican in sentiment and that if the DC waited any longer, it would end up losing the support of the people and the leadership of the country.⁹¹

The birth of the first Italian Republic and RAI

On 2 June 1946, the Italian people chose the Republic by national Referendum.⁹² The results of the concurrent Constituent Assembly elections proved once again that the Christian Democracy with 35% of the vote was the dominant party of the new Republic. The Communist Party was disappointed in taking second place (19%) to the Socialist Party (PSI, 20.7%) Between the beginning of the De Gasperi government and the referendum of 2 June, the left-wing parties had been strongly in favour of the creation of the Republic. Having opted against a "socialist revolution" the Communist Party had rested its hope on the elections; when those proved to be in favour of the Christian Democracy, the PCI changed from a party of government to a party of "government and opposition". On their part, the DC was ready to end the "forced cohabitation" in government with the Communist Party and started the process of elimination of the left which would successfully culminate in the 1948 elections.

RAI was now under the control of the Minister of Posts, Christian Democrat Mario Scelba who had been appointed by De Gasperi. From a legislative standpoint RAI had been unified between the Northern and the Southern networks on 20 December 1945

but the changes in management and structure had not affected the status quo. Indeed RAI still held the monopoly for radio transmission as stated in Article 1 of the 1936 Postal Code. The 1927 convention that granted EIAR exclusivity over radio was still in use and would not expire until 1952 because the Italian legal broadcasting system continued unbroken from Fascism to democracy. Continuity between the Fascist bureaucratic-administrative system and the new evolving democratic state was a part of political life. As Chabod states,

...the modern State is, for the most part, the technical organization of public life, in other words...bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is by nature a conservative force; its strength resides in the 'continuity' of the functions...not in its overthrow...the technical strength of the bureaucracy is therefore transformed in a political force of great impact...⁹³

In radio, Fascist management continued as ex-Fascists, but the phenomenon was not confined only to radio. The Press also retained names which had been active during Fascism. Journalist Paolo Murialdi noted:

The political conduct of the Allies, the lack of precise legislative criteria, the corporate fraternity existing among the journalists...the need for technicians, the lack of new capable personnel...the competition and the fight broken out among the political forces...these are the principal reasons for a badly implemented or non-existing expurgation.⁹⁴

The theme of continuity between the old and the new was essential in establishing the power of the Christian Democratic Party within the nation.

On 2 August 1946, the Administrative Council inside RAI was transformed: Jemolo was replaced by the Christian Democrat Giuseppe Spataro. He had been one of the leaders of the Popular Party along with Sturzo and De Gasperi before the beginning

of the Second World War. After the war Spataro became one of the founders of the Christian Democratic Party and was always actively involved in government. He remained President of RAI until 1950, when he was nominated Minister of Posts and Telecommunications. Spataro's role was instrumental in consolidating the administrative and organizational structure inside RAI according to the needs of the dominant party.⁹⁵ In addition to Spataro, some well-known names of EIAR reappeared inside the Council: Bernardi had been the general secretary of EIAR together with Chiodelli; Protto had been in the Administrative Councils almost without interruption since the times of URI. As the Christian Democratic Party consolidated its power both inside and outside RAI, Spataro cooperated with the new head of the government Alcide De Gasperi.

The replacement of Carlo Arturo Jemolo as President of RAI marked the end of its 'resistance period'⁹⁶ and was particularly significant because of Jemolo's belief in the importance of radio's responsibility for offering unbiased information. Jemolo was the first and last RAI president who truly tried to pursue the principles of a real democracy in an information system open to all and not directed by or against any specific interest group. This is evident in Jemolo's extraordinary and long forgotten article entitled *RAI as a Public Service*. In it, Jemolo discussed the role of radio in contemporary society and defined the task of radio managers as having paramount importance in preventing political propaganda on the air:

Radio can be a very powerful instrument of propaganda, in a democratic regime...it is open to the voices of the various parties, it has news of impeccable objectivity...leaving to the listener the critique of the sources; but in a regime which does not allow party pluralism, [radio] is...repetition of the ideas that the regime wishes to impose, assertion of the sole thesis of the government,

biased information which ignores the other side. Every reality has two faces: already the last war demonstrated the extreme difficulty in keeping people from knowing what really happens...⁹⁷

Again, probably envisioning the politicized future of RAI, Jemolo exhorted all the political forces to be equal and fair:

In a regime characterized by the coexistence of different political parties and by the possibility of their alternation to power, radio must not become an instrument of government propaganda, but must remain an unbiased public service of information from whom the listeners can obtain what they need without feeling offended...It would seem to me very beautiful and natural that in a regime characterized by political plurality, each party could obtain fifteen weekly minutes on the radio to let their ideology be heard by those who would want to listen.⁹⁸

Jemolo concluded the article with a description of his role and that of the other RAI executives in the company: ‘...to remain faithful to unbiased information, to the exposition of all the sources of information, even the most contradictory, is the service which renders freedom and political education to the citizens...’⁹⁹ The words of Jemolo were truly democratic. Christian Democracy was, in theory, following the same principles of democracy and freedom of expression, as demonstrated in a letter written by the Ministry of Posts Mario Scelba in September 1946:

Radio should not become an instrument in the hands of one or many political parties and not even of those who are in the government; it should be kept in mind that radio...must serve the public and that nothing should be said that could offend the social, political and religious conditions of the population; that the subscribing public have the right to occasionally express their point of view.¹⁰⁰

In reality however the dominant party was extremely aware of the importance of radio and, subsequently television, in ensuring ideological hegemony. Moreover, Scelba

himself was instrumental in getting Jemolo to resign. If the Christian Democrats would have been truly committed to an unbiased information system, they would have not pushed to remove its only sincere promoter, Carlo Arturo Jemolo. Just as the resignations of Ferruccio Parri as head of government symbolized the start of the DC's political hegemony, the transition of power between Jemolo and Spataro represented the official beginning of the dominant party's use and abuse of RAI in radio and television.

The years immediately following the fall of Mussolini leading up to the formation of the new Italian Republic were a time of turmoil and of the emergence of new political forces both inside RAI and in government. After the end of the Anglo-American governance, the minority DC had the resources to lead Italy into the post-war years with the aid of the Allies. Much to the delight of the Catholic Church, the Communist Party lost its post-Resistance momentum and resigned itself with being a voice of opposition within the government and, after 1948, outside the government. The left was incapable of securing its hold in radio as well. The PCI would have to wait until the middle of the 1950's to gain more power within RAI and until the mid-1960's to see a shift to the left in the government. In this climate of change *Radio Vaticana* expanded its influence and scope globally. The Catholic Church secured a firm position in the Italian society, supporting the development of the Christian Democratic Party and the support of the United States.

Notes

Lepre, A., (1993). *Storia della prima Repubblica: l'Italia dal 1942 al 1992*. Bologna: Societa' editrice il Mulino, p 15.

²Salvatorelli, L., Mira, G., (1964). *Storia d'Italia nel periodo Fascista*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, p.1088.

³" Nel momento in cui il nazismo tenta restaurare in Roma e in Italia il suo alleato Fascista, i partiti antiFascisti si costituiscono in Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale, per chiamare gli Italiani alla lotta e alla resistenza e per riconquistare all'Italia il posto che le compete nel consesso delle libere nazioni ". The

members of the first Committee of National Liberation were: Alessandro Casati for the Liberal Party, Alcide De Gasperi for the Christian Democracy, Ruini for the Democracy of Work (Democrazia del Lavoro), La Malfa for the Action Party, Nenni for the Socialist party and Scoccimarro for the Communist Party. Ibid, p.1112.

⁴ The industrial strikes (1944-1945) took place in major cities of Northern and Central Italy, such as Genoa, Turin (where the Fiat factories were occupied), Bologna, Milan and other industrial cities; they represented a significant sabotage of the war effort. Ibid, p.1089.

⁵ On 7 December 1944 an agreement was signed between the CLN and the Supreme Command of the Allied Forces. The agreement was intended to recognize the military authority of the Allied forces over Italy as well as define the nature of the cooperation between such forces and the members of the CLN and the Resistance. The agreement shows the respect of the Anglo-Americans for the CLN; however it also sheds light on the Allies' firm determination to control the CLN. The agreement included the following articles: **ARTICLE I:** The CLNAI was given the task of establishing and maintaining complete cooperation among all the elements that were active in the Resistance.

ARTICLE II: The general military command of the CLNAI was obligated to execute all the orders given by the Supreme Command of the Allied Forces.

ARTICLE III: The military chief of the CLNAI was to be approved by the Allies.

ARTICLE IV: The CLNAI was given the task of maintaining the law and the order until the defeat of the Nazis, at which time the CLNAI would resign its power to the Allied forces.

ARTICLE V: The Supreme Command of the Allied Forces was to give complete military and financial assistance to the CLNAI.

Ibid, p.1154.

⁶ Lepre, A., (1993). *Storia della prima Repubblica: l'Italia dal 1942 al 1992*. Bologna: Societa' editrice il Mulino, p 30.

⁷ Ibid., p15.

⁸ "La Sicilia non aveva fatto una vera difesa; la popolazione aveva accolto gli Inglesi e gli Americani come liberatori; le forze armate si erano per la maggior parte sbandate o avevano abbassato le armi senza combattere...". *Storia d'Italia nel periodo Fascista*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, p.1091.

⁹ "...di non aver mai visto nelle case dei contadini lucani il ritratto del re, del Duce e nemmeno di Garibaldi, ma di avervi sempre trovato, accanto all'immagine della Madonna, quella di Roosevelt..." Carlo Levi.

Ibid, p 14.

¹⁰ Ibid, p 16.

¹¹ Loc. Cit.

¹² Ibid, p 15.

¹³ Loc. Cit., p 15.

¹⁴ Monteleone, F. (1979). *Storia della RAI dagli alleati alla DC 1944-1954*. Bari: Laterza & Figli, p.23.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.24.

¹⁶ Ibid, p.47.

¹⁷ Ibid, p.25.

¹⁸ Radio Bari went on the air for the first time on 24 September 1943 under Allied control.

¹⁹ As of October, the Allied Command had taken possession of all the radio stations in the South: Palermo, Cagliari and Naples. Radio Palermo was under the command of an American of Italian origins; Radio Naples was supervised by the V American Army while Radio Bari was under the control of the VIII British Army. Ibid, p.31.

²⁰ J. Greenlees, (1973). *Radio Bari 1943-1944, in England and Italy in the 1900*. In Monteleone, F. (1979) *Storia della RAI dagli alleati alla DC 1944-1954*. Bari: Laterza & Figli, p.27.

²¹ The Germans were finally driven out of Italy by the Allies on September 1943.

²² " Nessun impianto radio o di comunicazione a lunga distanza, od altri mezzi di comunicazione a terra o galleggianti, sotto controllo italiano, sia che appartenga all'Italia o ad altra Nazione non facente parte delle Nazioni Unite, potra' trasmettere finche' disposizioni per il controllo di questi impianti non saranno state impartite dal Comando Supremo delle Forze Alleate. Le Autorita' Italiane si conformeranno alle disposizioni per il controllo e la censura della stampa e delle altre pubblicazioni, delle rappresentazioni teatrali e cinematografiche, della radiodiffusione e di qualsiasi altro mezzo di intercomunicazione che potra' prescrivere il Comandante Supremo delle Forze Alleate. Il Comandante Supremo delle Forze Alleate potra' a sua discrezione rilevare stazioni radio, cavi, od altri mezzi di comunicazione ". Ibid, p.28.

²³Ibid, p.29.

²⁴ " Erano per la maggior parte giornalisti, scrittori, uomini politici desiderosi di contribuire alla resurrezione dello Stato italiano, ma tutti giungevano Presso gli inglesi e gli americani orgogliosi e felici dell'impresa compiuta, fiduciosi nell'accoglienza che li attendava. I rischi sofferti li avevano allontanati dalla consapevolezza della guerra appena terminata, e rapidamente avevano introdotto nei loro animi il senso di una fratellanza d'armi con gli uomini i quali sino a pochi giorni avevano combattuto. Tale sentimento era sviluppato dalla solidarieta' che li univa agli inglesi e agli americani fuggiti dai campi di prigionia..."A. degli Espinosa, (1973). *Il Regno del Sud*. Roma, pp. 167-168.

²⁵ A good example of the Allied control over radio is the Naldi case. Filippo Naldi was nominated as head of the Press Office directly under the supervision of the PWB. Naldi was known for his anti-Fascist and anti-monarchic views. After having been amply criticized by the BBC, he was eventually forced to resign because the British did not approve of his criticisms toward the monarchy. Ibid, p.32.

²⁶ Ibid, p.33.

²⁷"Il governo militare alleato...non si occupa di attivita' politiche in Italia, all'infuori del fatto che non entrera' in rapporti con i traditori Fascisti. Suo proposito e' di aiutare l'onesto popolo italiano, nella sua interezza, e senza tener conto a quale risorto partito o classe le persone appartengono, nei suoi sforzi di ricostruzione. Tutto questo si deve tener presente continuamente. Patrioti e cittadini dell'Italia liberata, di questo o quel partito o di questa o quella classe, che si aspettassero di fare dell'AMG un alleato per la realizzazione dei loro particolari interessi, andrebbero incontro a delusioni ". Ibid, p.34.

²⁸The members of the editorial staff of Italia Combatte had to use fake names to protect their friends and families who may have still been living in German occupied territories. They were: Alba de Cespedes (Clorinda), Diego Calcagno (Abele), Pio Ambrogetti (Anghelos), Anton Giulio Majano (Zollo), Antonietta Drago (Giuditta), Giorgio Spini (Valdo Gigli), Gabriele Baldini (Antonio Rivolta), Agostino degli Espinosa (Astolfo), Vincenzo Talarico (Ciclope). Ibid, p.45.

²⁹Salvatorelli, L., Mira, G., (1964). *Storia d'Italia nel periodo Fascista*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, p.1131.

³⁰The actual beginning of the Christian Democratic Party occurred in the summer of 1942 after a series of meetings between Alcide De Gasperi, initially of the Popular Party, and the exponents of the Guelfo Movement, headed by Malvestiti who had been actively involved in politics since before the beginning of the Second World War. The official beginning of the party was recorded in a meeting held at the home of engineer Falk in the summer of 1942. All those present established an initial commission whose task was to create a platform for the new Christian Democratic Party. During the first months after the creation of the party, members of the commission worked toward reestablishing contacts with other Catholic groups in the country. Cervellati Cantelli, F. et.al. (1968). *L'organizzazione partitica del PCI e della DC*. Bologna: Societa' Editrice Il Mulino.

³¹Lepre, A., (1993). *Storia della prima Repubblica: l'Italia dal 1942 al 1992*. Bologna: Societa' editrice il Mulino, p. 18.

³²Sassoon, D., (1986). *Contemporary Italy*. New York: Longman, p. 226.

³³Loc. Cit.

³⁴*Le Idee Ricostruttive della Democrazia Cristiana*. Lepre, A., (1993). *Storia della prima Repubblica: l'Italia dal 1942 al 1992*. Bologna: Societa' editrice il Mulino, p. 18.

³⁵Ibid, p. 19.

³⁶Loc. Cit.

³⁷Loc. Cit.

³⁸Sassoon, D., (1986). *Contemporary Italy*. New York: Longman, p. 227.

³⁹Loc. Cit.

⁴⁰Loc. Cit.

⁴¹Vergnano, Igino, (1970). *Dibattito politico e Costituzione Italiana*. Torino: Paravia p.56.

⁴²The Socialist Party (PSI) had a minor role in the fight against Fascism in the 1930's. After the fall of Mussolini, it became one of the major parties in the Resistance. As Sassoon states: " Although it did not have an organization able to match that of the PCI and it could not count on the general support enjoyed by the DC through the Church, it had greater electoral influence than the PCI ". In the 1946 elections it came out as the second party after the DC, and although it quickly lost its place to the PCI, it nevertheless remained as the most influential of the minor parties, behind the PCI and the DC. It was subordinate to the PCI for many reasons: its political line of conduct was concentrated on establishing the amount of

cooperation it should have with the Communist Party instead of formulating its own platform; also, from its very beginning the PSI was closely tied to various Communist organizations such as the trade union CGIL. In the 1960's the PSI was included in the government after uniting with the Social Democrats led by Saragat. As a result, it suffered a split which caused the creation of the Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP). The PSI was prepared to pay this price because it hoped that a merger with the Social Democrats would create a 'counterbalance' to the power of the DC in the government. However the new party was defeated at the 1968 elections. The main problem of the PSI was always that of finding an image of its own which would be demarcated from that of the DC or the PCI. In Sassoon, D., (1986). *Contemporary Italy*. New York: Longman, p. 239-240.

⁴³di Nolfo, Ennio. *The United States and the PCI: the years of policy formation, 1942-1946*. In Serfaty, S. Gray, Lawrence, (1980). *The Italian Communist Party: yesterday, today and tomorrow*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, p.53 .

⁴⁴Saitta, A. *Dal Fascismo alla Resistenza*. In Vergnano, Igino, (1970). *Dibattito politico e Costituzione Italiana*. Torino: Paravia p.52.

⁴⁵"...era portatrice nel suo seno di tutto un mondo di nuovi valori, dal quale, il giorno della vittoria, sarebbe dovuto sorgere un ordine nuovo nel campo morale, politico e sociale, capace di chiudere definitivamente la strada al Fascismo e di porre l'odierna societa' su solide basi democratiche e progressiste ". Saitta, A. *Dal Fascismo alla Resistenza*. Loc. Cit.

⁴⁶"Dopo il 25 luglio, mentre nei grandi centri del Nord fu agevole, sotto il controllo della direzione, formare organizzazioni uniche in ogni citta', con l'abolizione dei vecchi compartimenti stagni e la riorganizzazione su base territoriale per settori e zone, nel Centro e nel Meridione la riunione dei vari gruppi, spesso assai eterogenei, fu assai laboriosa e avvenne a volte non senza crisi e contrasti. Ma particolarmente difficile fu il problema di dare, nelle condizioni di quel momento di semi legalita', senza possibilita' di grandi assemblee e di comizi, e senza liberta' di stampa, un orientamento politico unico a tutto il partito. Mentre la direzione svolgeva la sua azione politica sulla linea sopra indicata di unita' nazionale, quasi tutti i gruppi con cui essa prendeva contatto erano orientati in modo molto settario e per questo erano portati a non comprendere e a non approvare le iniziative politiche prese dal centro ". Cervellati Cantelli, F. et. al. (1968). *L'organizzazione partitica del PCI e della DC*. Bologna: Societa' Editrice Il Mulino, p.29.

⁴⁷Ibid, p.39.

⁴⁸ In Yugoslavia, for example, Tiot and the partisans took over; in Greece, the Communist revolution led to the Truman Doctrine and the U.S. drawing the line against Soviet expansion.

⁴⁹Serfaty, S., Gray, Lawrence, (1980). *The Italian Communist Party: yesterday, today and tomorrow*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, p.43, 44.

⁵⁰Sassoon, D., (1986). *Contemporary Italy*. New York: Longman, p. 233.

⁵¹Togliatti, P. (1973). In loc. cit.

⁵²Murialdi, P. *La Stampa Italiana del dopoguerra*, p. 15.

⁵³The parties included in the second Badoglio government were: Partito Liberale (Liberal Party), Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democracy), Democrazia del Lavoro (Democracy of Work), Partito D'Azione (Action Party), Partito Socialista (Socialist Party), Partito Comunista (Communist Party). Benedetto Croce and Carlo Sforza also participated as ministers without portfolio.

⁵⁴Benedetto Croce was the leader of the Liberal Party. Before the advent of Fascism the liberals had been a strong opinion party. However, after the re-emergence of the Communist Party and the creation of the Socialist Party, the Liberal Party lost most of its supporters and became a minor political entity. In Lepre, A., (1993). *Storia della prima Repubblica: l'Italia dal 1942 al 1992*. Bologna: Societa' editrice il Mulino, p. 21.

⁵⁵Salvatorelli, L., Mira, G., (1964). *Storia d'Italia nel periodo Fascista*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, p.1132.

⁵⁶The structure of the first government of national unity saw Bonomi as head of internal and foreign affairs while the other positions were divided among the various political parties:

<u>Name/s</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Ministries</u>
Siglienti, De Ruggiero	Action Party	Finances, Education
Cerabona	Democratic Work Party	Communications
Gronchi, Tupini	Christian Democratic Party	Industry, Commerce and Work, Justice

Mancini	Socialist Party	Public Works
Gullo	Communist Party	Agriculture

Not members of any political parties were:

De Courten	Marine
Piacentini	Aviation

There were also seven advisors and controllers of the cabinet:

Benedetto Croce	Liberal Party
Alcide De Gasperi	Christian Democracy
Meuccio Ruini	Democratic Work Party
Alberto Gianca	Action Party
Giuseppe Saragat	Socialist Party
Palmiro Togliatti	Communist Party
Carlo Sforza	Independent but very close to the Republicans. He was given the role of Commissioner for the Fascist expurgation.

⁵⁷Monteleone, F. (1979). *Storia della RAI dagli alleati alla DC 1944-1954*. Bari: Laterza & Figli, p.51.

⁵⁸Lepre, A., (1993). *Storia della prima Repubblica: l'Italia dal 1942 al 1992*. Bologna: Societa' editrice il Mulino, p.26.

⁵⁹Monteleone, F. (1992). *Storia della radio e della televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio, p.196.

⁶⁰Monteleone, F. (1979). *Storia della RAI dagli alleati alla DC 1944-1954*. Bari: Laterza & Figli, p.61.

⁶¹Based on Decree N. 645 of 27 February 1936. The Ministry of Popular Culture had been abolished and transformed in the Ministry of Education keeping most of its ex-Fascist personnel.

⁶²Monteleone, F. (1979). *Storia della RAI dagli alleati alla DC 1944-1954*. Bari: Laterza & Figli, p. 61.

⁶³"La funzione formativa della radio, la sua vasta e sollecita capacita' di informazione, l'apporto che la radio da' alla conoscenza degli sviluppi della vita politica nazionale e internazionale, costituiscono caratteristiche sufficienti a giustificare la necessita' di una disciplina univoca che parta da uno specifico organo amministrativo e politico, che sia sussidiato tecnicamente da un apposito dicastero tecnico, nel conseguimento di scopi distinti seppure rivolti a un fine comune. Il compito di incrementare la produzione artistica radiofonica, il coordinamento nella compilazione e nella presentazione di programmi di trasmissione, la loro messa a punto e ambientazione politica, l'organizzazione dei servizi per l'estero in lingua straniera, lo studio degli accordi con le nazioni estere per la distribuzione delle lunghezze d'onda tra i vari paesi del mondo, non possono ne' debbono essere assorbiti da un ministero a carattere tecnico qual e' quello delle Poste e Telecomunicazioni ". Letter of Giuseppe Spataro to the Presidency of the Council. In Monteleone, F. (1992). *Storia della radio e della televisione in Italia*. Venezia: Saggi Marsilio, p. 197.

⁶⁴"La necessita' di avere, Presso il sottosegretariato per la Stampa e per le Informazioni, un organo consultivo per il coordinamento ed il controllo dei programmi radiofonici. Infatti la radio rispecchia la molteplice vita della nazione e tra le masse degli ascoltatori la sua voce assume un carattere di responsabilita' collettiva che manca agli altri mezzi di informazione ". A report sent by the head of the Under Secretariship for the Press and Information. In Monteleone, F. (1979). *Storia della RAI dagli alleati alla DC 1944-1954*. Bari: Laterza & Figli, p. 63.

⁶⁵Loc. Cit.

⁶⁶Ibid, p. 52.

⁶⁷Lepre, A., (1993). *Storia della prima Repubblica: l'Italia dal 1942 al 1992*. Bologna: Societa' editrice il Mulino, p. 29-30.

⁶⁸Zaccaria, R. (1977). *Radiotelevisione e Costituzione*. Milano: Giuffre' Editore.

⁶⁹Chiarenza, F. (1978). *Il cavallo morente: trent'anni di radiotelevisione italiana*. Milano: Bompiani.

⁷⁰"Eccellenza, perdoni se mi rivolgo personalmente a Lei, ma prima di giungere cosi' in alto ho esperito tutte le altre vie possibili senza successo. Non sono ancora riuscito a sapere da quale ministero dipenda questo ente giacche' mi vedo conteso dai ministeri delle Comunicazioni, Pubblica Istruzione e dal Sottosegretariato Stampa e Informazioni...mi permetto vivamente di interessare V.E. perche' venga presto risolto tale problema; piccolo in apparenza ma importante nella sostanza giacche' mancando esso di

soluzione molte attività di questo ente rimangono paralizzate ". In In Monteleone, F. (1979). *Storia della RAI dagli alleati alla DC 1944-1954*. Bari: Laterza & Figli, p 71.

⁷¹Note that the Under-Secretaryship of Press and Information was supervised by Giuseppe Spataro, one of the leading exponents of the Christian Democratic Party.

⁷²Ibid, p. 64.

⁷³"La commissione interna, a nome di tutti i lavoratori della radio che essa rappresenta, rileva particolarmente la necessità che alla radio siano preposti dirigenti capaci, i quali agiscano secondo una piena competenza, secondo la comprensione delle necessità del personale, e secondo una sincera corrispondenza ai principi di una bene intesa democrazia ". A letter written by the Internal Commission of RAI to the Bonomi government on March 1, 1945. Ibid, p 65.

⁷⁴Ibid, p. 89, footnote Nr. 1.

⁷⁵Ibid, p. 76.

⁷⁶Chiarenza, F. (1978). *Il cavallo morente: trent'anni di radiotelevisione italiana*. Milano: Bompiani, p.18. To show the seriousness of RAI's financial situation note that in 1944 it showed a loss of L.23,697,000.

⁷⁷SIPRA (Italian Society for Anonymous Radiophonic Publicity) was created on April 9, 1926. Its financial capital was divided between the Unione Radiofonica Italiana (URI), the Società Italiana Radio Audizioni Circolari (SIRAC) and a group of Milanese private investors. Subsequently, on October 30, 1931, SIPRA was bought by the privately owned Società Idroelettrica Piemontese (SIP). SIP itself was going to have financial problems and be bought by the state-owned Istituto di Ricostruzione Industriale (IRI). Siliato, F (1977). *L'Antenna dei Padroni*. Milano: Gabriele Mazzotta Editore, p.27, 29.

⁷⁸"Avevamo la sensazione di una grande autonomia nelle scelte dei programmi, nei contenuti culturali e nella linea della programmazione che intendevamo proseguire...Dopo il centralismo Fascista ci bastava sapere che potevamo decidere tutto da noi, o quasi ". Seroni, A. (1977). In Monteleone, F. (1979). *Storia della RAI dagli alleati alla DC 1944-1954*. Bari: Laterza & Figli, p 79.

⁷⁹"Il periodo dopo la Liberazione ha portato per qualche anno una ventata nuova nella radio ed allora si è data la possibilità ai Partiti, agli Enti, ai movimenti politici e culturali, attraverso la radio, di far sentire la loro voce; ma anche in quel periodo si è trattato di una modificazione di forze, di uomini che sono stati portati a dire delle cose diverse, dietro la ventata della Liberazione, ma non di una modificazione di sostanza. Si esercitò la libertà per un periodo assai breve, si tolsero le discriminazioni che vigevano sotto il Fascismo, ma non si fecero i passi necessari per arrivare a quelle modificazioni di struttura che erano indispensabili per garantire quella libertà e quella obiettività che la radio doveva conservare ". Davide Layolo, in Parri, F. (1963). *RAI come pubblico servizio*. Atti del Convegno dell'Associazione Radio-Teleabbonati, p. 78.

⁸⁰Between June 30, 1910 and April 14, 1975, when the Reform was passed, all laws dealing with radio and television were formulated solely by the government through the emanation of various law-decrees.

⁸¹Sassoon, D., (1986). *Contemporary Italy*. New York: Longman, p.188.

⁸²"Coscicche' la radio e la TV hanno continuato anche in questi anni a fare le trattative con i governi, al di fuori del Parlamento, a stabilire i loro contratti e le loro possibilità di manifestare solo il pensiero di coloro che essi pensavano fossero i padroni della situazione...Non è derivata quindi alcuna chiarezza di rapporti, i bilanci non sono mai stati messi in luce né sotto il controllo del Parlamento, non sono stati chiariti i rapporti economici fra governo e organizzazione radiotelevisiva, non è stato fatto nessun controllo, né da parte del Parlamento né tantomeno dall'opinione pubblica ". Parri, F. (1963). *RAI come pubblico servizio*. Atti del Convegno dell'Associazione Radio-Teleabbonati, p. 78, 79.

⁸³Monteleone, F. (1979). *Storia della RAI dagli alleati alla DC 1944-1954*. Bari: Laterza & Figli, p 81.

⁸⁴"Noi abbiamo già deplorato l'assenza di obiettività della RAI, soprattutto grave trattandosi di un organo di informazione a carattere monopolistico e che quindi dovrebbe rimanere, in ogni caso, al di sopra della mischia. Non possiamo non notare che i servizi pubblici vanno serviti con serenità e disciplina ". Chiarenza, F., (1978). *Il cavallo morente: trent'anni di radiotelevisione italiana*. Milano: Bompiani, p.19.

⁸⁵"Forza militare degli Alleati, che controllano l'Italia. L'Amministrazione Militare Alleata (AMG) favorisce largamente gli elementi moderati, non certo quelli rivoluzionari '...Netta differenza di opinioni e di atteggiamenti fra l'Italia Settentrionale e l'Italia da Roma in giù'. L'Italia del Sud non ha conosciuto la Resistenza...i legami col governo Badoglio sono sempre stati stretti e Pressoché continui. La liberazione, a Roma, si compie con l'ingresso delle truppe alleate e non, come a Genova, a Torino, a Milano...con l'entrata delle formazioni partigiane. Infine su tutta la scena domina il Santo Padre, il Vaticano, con una forza ben

superiore a quella del CLN..." In Vergnano, Igino, (1970). *Dibattito politico e Costituzione Italiana*. Torino: Paravia p.54.

⁸⁶"La convergenza di interessi tra la burocrazia dirigenziale dell'ente e la nuova classe politica che si accingeva a rompere l'esperienza unitaria del CLN, fu evidente e incontrastata...i tentativi delle stazioni radiofoniche che...cercavano di mantenere i propri margini di autonomia nella programmazione, furono ostacolati e vanificati sin dai primissimi mesi." Chiarenza, F. (1978). *Il cavallo morente: trent'anni di radiotelevisione italiana*. Milano: Bompiani, p.22.

⁸⁷"L'auspicato cambiamento delle strutture del paese e della classe al potere non si era verificato, tutto rimase Pressoche' immutato, ne' cambio' la fisionomia sociale, anzi l'arcaicita' delle leve di comando stava assurdamente compromettendo il processo di modernizzazione dello Stato ". Monteleone, F. (1979). *Storia della RAI dagli alleati alla DC 1944-1954*. Bari: Laterza & Figli, p 81.

⁸⁸"...aveva subito condanne e carcere per la irriducibile opposizione al Fascismo durante il ventennio...l'investitura a Parri assumeva il valore di una legalizzazione del CLN, il riconoscimento del suo apporto fondamentale alla riscossa Italiana, ed anche un'ipoteca per un nuovo corso politico ". In Bendiscioli, (1947). *La crisi della Resistenza*. Il Ponte: n. 11-12, november-december. Roma: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, p.356.

⁸⁹"Rimise l'incarico nelle mani del CLN centrale, denunciando nell'amarezza dell'ora, nelle forze che avevano provocato il ritiro del Governo della Resistenza, l'intenzione di restaurare col vecchio Stato le stesse strutture autoritarie, oligarchiche che si erano adattate al Fascismo, e forme illiberali dello stesso deprecato Fascismo ". In Vergnano, Igino, (1970). *Dibattito politico e Costituzione Italiana*. Torino: Paravia p.51.

⁹⁰Ibid, p.55.

⁹¹Lepre, A., (1993). *Storia della prima Repubblica: l'Italia dal 1942 al 1992*. Bologna: Societa' editrice il Mulino, p.71.

⁹²The results of the Referendum were as follows:

Republic	12,717,903 votes	54.3%
Monarchy	10,719,285	

The seats in the Constituent Assembly were 556 and divided among the parties as follows:

Democrazia Cristiana (DC , centre)	207 seats	35.2%
Partito Socialista (PSI, left)	115	20.7%
Partito Comunista (PCI, left)	104	19%
Unione Democratica Nazionale (Udn, centre)	41	6.8%
Uomo Qualunque (Uq, centre/right)	30	5.3%
Partito Repubblicano (Pri, centre)	23	4.4%
BN	16	2.8%
Partito d'Azione (PdA, centre/left)	9	1.8%
OTHERS	4	2.7%

⁹³"Lo Stato moderno e', per molta parte, l'organizzazione tecnica della vita pubblica, cioe', come dicevo, la burocrazia. Ora, la burocrazia e' naturalmente conservatrice; la sua forza risiede nella ' continuita ' delle funzioni, non certo nel sovvertimento...La forza tecnica della burocrazia si trasforma cosi' in una forza politica di gran peso..." In Vergnano, Igino, (1970). *Dibattito politico e Costituzione Italiana*. Torino: Paravia p.55.

⁹⁴"La condotta politica degli alleati, la mancanza di criteri giuridici precisi, quel tanto di fraternita' corporativa esistente fra i giornalisti, il peso delle amicizie, il bisogno di tecnici, la carenza di nuove leve...infine la concorrenza e poi la rissa scatenatasi fra le forze politiche, il realismo che impronta in particolare l'azione dei democristiani e dei comunisti, l'ondata qualunquista: queste sono le ragioni principali di un'epurazione fatta male o addirittura inesistente ". Monteleone, F. (1979). *Storia della RAI dagli alleati alla DC 1944-1954*. Bari: Laterza & Figli, p 84.

⁹⁵Chiarenza, F. (1978). *Il cavallo morente: trent'anni di radiotelevisione italiana*. Milano: Bompiani, p. 264.

⁹⁶Ibid, p.20.

⁹⁷" La radio puo' essere altresì un potentissimo mezzo di propaganda; in un regime libero essa e' aperta alle voci delle varie parti, ha un notiziario d'impeccabile parzialita', che da comunicati di diverse agenzie, riassunti di diversi giornali, lasciando all'ascoltatore la critica delle fonti; ma in un regime che non ammette pluralita' di partiti, e' instancabile ripetizione delle idee che il regime desidera imporre, asserzione delle sole

tesi del Governo al potere, informazione parziale, che ignora i racconti e le smentite avversarie. Peraltro ogni realta' ha due facce: gia' la scorsa guerra dimostro la estrema difficolta' di tenere un popolo all'oscuro di quanto realment avviene..." In RAI, 1952 Annual. *RAI come pubblico servizio*, p. 16.

⁹⁸Ibid, p. 22.

⁹⁹"...nel restare fedeli alla notizia imparziale, alla esposizione di tutte le fonti di informazioni, anche le piu' discordi...ed alla educazione politica dei cittadini ". Ibid, p. 23.

¹⁰⁰"Che la radio non diventi strumento di partito o di partiti, nemmeno di quelli che stanno al governo; che si tenga conto del fatto che la radio vive nel pubblico e deve servire il pubblico, e nulla deve essere detto che possa offendere le condizioni civili, politiche e religiose del popolo; che il pubblico dei radioabbonati abbia il diritto di dire saltuariamente la sua parola. Chiarenza, F. (1978). *Il cavallo morente: trent'anni di radiotelevisione italiana*. Milano: Bompiani, p.22.

SPECIAL NOTE

**ITEM SCANNED AS SUPPLIED
PAGINATION IS AS SEEN**

CONCLUSION

This doctoral dissertation examined the history of *Radio Vaticana* as the voice of the Vatican State and of the Papacy, from its founding in 1931 through to the end of the Second World War, within the development of media in Italy during and after Fascism. The history of *Radio Vaticana* must be seen in the context of the overall development of Fascist radio. While Mussolini was tightening his control over all forms of mass communication for his own propaganda purposes, *Radio Vaticana* represented an important dimension of the Roman Catholic Church's response to what was, at the time, modern technology. The Vatican understood the potential of the new electronic medium for explicating the faith and evangelizing those who had not yet come into contact with Catholicism, therefore aiding missionary work.

The Catholic Church's use of radio was significantly different than the state. Curiously, although Marconi was Italian and led the way in radio development, Mussolini appeared to have more faith in the Luce newsreels and feature films than in radio. Perhaps he thought that the visual was much stronger than the audio; newsreels could show him in all his glory, as the reincarnated Julius Caesar. The Vatican, however, did not have a newsreel. Before the development of radio, the most effective way to reach the population in the rural villages and small towns was from the pulpit during Sunday mass. With radio, the Church became increasingly more concerned with speaking internationally, while Italy's view of broadcasting remained more parochial; whereas the Nazi short-wave radio broadcast internationally, Italian programmes were aimed primarily at undermining British power in Egypt and Palestine. As Fascist propaganda over the airwaves became increasingly less believable and showed the decline of

Mussolini's totalitarian vision, the voice of the Pope on *Radio Vaticana*, instead, helped to secure the continuity of the survival of the Church and the expansion of its influence worldwide.

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After the fall of the Fascist government, *Radio Vaticana* concentrated on expanding the *Ufficio Informazioni* (Information Office) to assist war prisoners and their families in communicating via messages broadcasted on the air. The office had started operating in 1939, when requests had come to Pope Pius XII to help locate people who had disappeared after the invasion of Poland. As the historian Fernando Bea points out, many of the volunteers that aided the *Ufficio Informazioni* were located in dangerous places, especially after the division of Italy, and suffered imprisonment, incarceration and sometimes death to complete their missions. On 24 March 1944 for instance, the *Polizia Repubblicana Fascista* (Republican Fascist Police) broke into the offices of the Catholic newspaper *La Casa* and arrested its director, Father Paolo Liggeri because he was caught listening and relating messages coming from the Vatican. He was later found guilty of collaboration with the Badoglio government and responsible for the transmission of clandestine programmes.¹

The broadcasts began with a series of alerts to listeners. At first the programme only included a few countries and a few hours a week, but necessity made it grow rapidly, expanding it in just a few months to seventy weekly broadcasts lasting two to three hours a day. Sometimes however, depending on the circumstances, the broadcasts could last as long as thirteen hours a day.² As the conflict and the loss of life increased, so did the broadcasts from *Radio Vaticana*; in a nation that was literally being

disintegrated by war and by the fracture created by the fall of the Mussolini dictatorship, the Vatican broadcasts represented the only hope families had of obtaining news about the imprisoned, wounded, or dead. The breakdown of programmes shows the increase in the number of broadcasts:

Year	Total minutes of airtime	Total Messages
1940	2,509	5,252
1941	56,458	103,162
1942	132,154	226,755
1943	139,127	245,289
1944	159,401	293,714 ³

As the war came to a close, the numbers also started to drop, although the *Ufficio Informazioni* remained in operation until 1948:

1945	138,794	238,748
1946	97,865	127,808
1947	9,800	9,950
1948	(two daily programmes in German)	

It should also be noted that between 1943 and 1944 *Radio Vaticana* sent the messages obtained by the *Ufficio Informazioni* to Africa, South Africa, Argentina, Australia, China, Belgium Congo, French Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece, India, England, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Malta, Mozambique, French-speaking Europe, Palestine, Syria, Sudan, Thailand, Turkey, and Venezuela.⁴ The personnel of the office grew to over one hundred individuals, including many religious orders, professionals, and students who had been long time members of the *Azione Cattolica*, such as Giovanni De Lucia, responsible for the sector of the office that dealt with requests sent directly to the Pope:

We worked from morning to night in the Archive of the *Ufficio Informazioni*, located in the vast chapel of the *San Carlo* building. On the wall there was a large

photograph of Pius XII in the act of embracing his people and underneath it the now famous quote, nothing is lost with peace, everything can be lost with war.⁵

Starting in 1940, *Radio Vaticana*'s lists of messages reached foreign countries with regularity. On 30 August, 1940 the station connected with Sydney, Australia. The programme continued weekly, as reported by *L'Osservatore Romano*:

...The news deal primarily with civil prisoners, the crews of steamships, religious people and others who have been deported there, the families of propaganda seminarians, to whom the radio periodically transmits a message with news of their relatives; likewise, information is given about Australian war prisoners.⁶

The same format and weekly schedule was followed for Egypt, India, the Far East and China. The first correspondence with England occurred on 5 September 1940. The OVRA⁷ was initially concerned that the transmission of such long lists of names may hide a coded messages intended for the Allies. After carefully monitoring the Catholic radio station the Italian secret police gave up on the notion that the programme was a façade for espionage. They were aided in the decision by the thousands of Italian that went to the *Ufficio Informazioni* everyday to place their requests.⁸

The Vatican State Secretariat still has volumes of material related to the *Ufficio Informazioni* and its cooperation with *Radio Vaticana*. An overview of the letters sent to the Vatican by the families of the war prisoners and the missing clearly shows the monumental impact of such work and it is worth noting. A widowed mother, writing from Turin, stated:

(The communication received from the Holy See) has dissipated the agony of our desperate family and filled our hearts with the greatest joy. The diligence and the speed with which we have received news of my beloved son are proof that...in the Church of Our Lord helping the unhappy and the needy is everyday practice and that no one asks for help in vain when it comes to Christian piety...⁹

On another instance, the wife of a war prisoner wrote:

In the horrible uncertainty of agonizing days you have brought a ray of sunshine, you have given me once again the trust to wait for better days, when the war will be over and my (husband) will be back home.¹⁰

Aside from the service provided by the *Ufficio Informazioni*, the Catholic radio station tried to the best of its abilities to maintain a semblance of regular programming with regards to services and various commentaries of a religious nature. In 1941 for instance the Holy Mass was broadcast at the same time every day, 11:30am, in a multitude of languages: Portuguese, Spanish, English, Lithuanian, Italian, Ukrainian, French, Dutch, and German.¹¹ In 1941 as well *Radio Vaticana* broadcast a series of programmes to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the famous encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and the tenth anniversary of *Quadragesimo Anno*. In 1943, the station also began a programme in Russian, a particularly significant event since neither the Voice of America or the BBC had Russian broadcasts at this time or until the end of the Cold War period.

Since 1941 and the end of the stations' active involvement in the propaganda war of the airwaves, interesting and notable moments on the air commenting on the political situation became sparse. Exceptions are the papal broadcast for peace in 1942 and the comments to the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* in which Pope Pius XII denounced the concept of a human race superior to all others. *Radio Vaticana* reported and exalted the encyclical for an extended period of time in all languages. Following the encyclical, the French speaking programmes of the radio station denounced repeatedly the anti-Semitic policy of the French Prime Minister Pierre Laval.¹²

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When the Badoglio government declared Rome an “open city” on 14 August 1943 and the Germans invaded the capital, the situation of the Vatican became precarious at best. The 9:30 p.m. curfew was challenging for the Jesuits who were in charge of the radio station’s evening programming. The Germans would give them passes to get through the blocks; even though *Radio Vaticana* was able to continue its programming, the content was limited to the *Ufficio Informazioni* lists and to the masses and religious programmes mentioned before. After the fall of Fascism and Mussolini’s escape to Northern Italy, il Duce asked that the Catholic Church recognize the new Socialist Republic in light of the Concordat; the Vatican Secretariat of State replied negatively, stating that the Concordat had been signed between the Church and the Italian State which was now located in Bari with its legitimate leader, King Victor Emmanuel III.¹³ Fascist newspapers reacted vehemently against the perceived betrayal of the church: ‘With such an unheard of refusal the Catholic Church has aligned itself with the Jews, the Anglicans, the Communists and all those who are the enemies of Italy.’¹⁴

On 3 June 1944 the American liberation of Rome marked the beginning of the reconstructive phase of *Radio Vaticana*. Between 1943 and the official end of the war in Europe on 8 May, 1945, the Catholic radio station continued to expand its programming again, focusing its attention of the development of missionary programmes and on the fight against Communism.

In the next four years leading up to the drafting of the new Italian Constitution in 1948, the Christian Democratic Party and the Catholic Church established themselves firmly in the new Italian society with the help of the Western powers, especially the United States, at the expenses of the Communist party. The growth of the DC continued

undisputed for the next twenty years, as the American aid expanded through the Marshall Plan. Successive Christian Democratic governments rebuilt RAI and Italian broadcasting, marking it with strict political control which continued with almost no effective opposition until the 1970's, as evidenced in the 1947 Broadcasting Act and the passing of the new convention between RAI and the state in 1952. Italy's political left was locked into an ineffective opposition and by 1954, the Christian Democrats had firmly consolidated their power both inside the government and RAI.

The Communist Party struggled ineffectively to maintain its position in the government. After the elections of 1946 and the following one of February 2, 1947, Togliatti was forced to accept the reality that the DC was going to be the majority party. In fact during the 1947 elections, the tightening grip of the DC had intensified as the most important tasks in the government were given to DC ministers: Mario Scelba, already known for his role in communications became Minister of Internal Affairs; Pietro Campilli became Minister of Finance and Treasure succeeding Scoccimarro, Guido Gonella remained as Minister of Public Instructions and Antonio Segni was put in charge of Agriculture. The Communists kept the Ministry of Justice and obtained the Ministries of Public Works (Emilio Sereni) and Transportation (Giacomo Ferrari). While the Christian Democrats were trying to end the post-war alliance with the left, the PCI's only hope in the government was to maintain the status quo, with the power divided between the three major parties, the DC, PCI and Socialists. On the other hand, the worsening of the international situation between the Americans and the Russians with the escalation of the Cold War, was rendering increasingly difficult for the PCI to stay in a coalition government without compromising its loyalty to the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party was quickly losing its influence nationally and within RAI as well. However, as Chiarenza states, between 1946 and 1948 and before the official drafting of the Constitution, the power of the Christian Democrats over RAI was not so firmly consolidated that it would not give rise to protests and controversies by the left.¹⁵ Left-wing radio journalists had enjoyed a relative degree of freedom immediately following the war, however, with the reorganization of RAI under its Christian Democratic managers, it had become difficult to maintain the previous freedom. In an unusually bold move, in 1947 the Communist Party attempted to pressure the government to pass legislation which would guarantee a more unbiased information system.

On 3 April 1947 Decree Nr. 428 was passed. From the very beginning this decree proved to be completely ineffective in fulfilling the requests of the left. The reasons why the Communists agreed to the implementation of such inadequate legislature are a matter of controversy. Perhaps they initially believed that the inclusion of the Parliament in the managing of RAI could be a truly innovative change, even though some articles of the Act were suspiciously ambiguous. More probably, however, the left was busy occupying itself with political struggles and grossly overlooked the soon-to-be apparent shortcomings of Decree Nr. 428. Whatever the reasons may have been, the Communists made a terrible mistake in accepting the new legislature; in fact, the Christian Democrats succeeded in turning the decree into another tool of political control over the state-owned radio, while at the same time using the act as the perfect facade of political objectivity.

While the DC chose a safe and comfortable road which led back through Mussolini to the Monarchy, the left did not even truly try effectively to gain power inside RAI. The inability of the Communist Party to establish more solid bases of influence

nationally and inside RAI is significant considering how the party which had gained great popularity in the immediate post-war years forgot Fascism. RAI's silencing of the left helped shape the future of Italian public opinion.

The fascinating and unique element of Italy's political and communication history is that there was never any clear break between the pre-Fascist and the post-Fascist eras. Indeed, the body of law remained intact as well as the rudimentary Parliamentary system. Even the structure of the government was consistently similar. During the Monarchic period, the King had ruled along with a pluralist representation of political forces in the Parliament; Mussolini had transformed Italy in a totalitarian state, but had maintained the Constitutional Monarchy for appearances. With the fall of Fascism and the creation of the Republic, the figure of the King had been replaced by that of the President, the Parliament had remained, but with regards to communications it had very marginal powers. Finally another dominant party, the DC, was allowed to establish its hegemony based on a slender plurality on practically every facet of the Italian political life. The only difference in this last instance is that such control was hidden behind the pretence of abiding to the principles of the new-found democracy. While it is certainly true that the abolition of Fascism represented the end of Italy's totalitarian era, it must also not be forgotten that the same organizational, administrative and bureaucratic machine was allowed to survive.

The inevitable consequence of this political continuity was a severe hindering in the process of modernization and democratization of the country at large and of RAI. The blatant and often ridiculous propaganda put forth by Mussolini was gone, but majority-favourable news dissemination and the shaping of public consent was of utmost

importance for the ruling party and, however subtly, still very pervasive. In particular, abuses of power, political influences and corruption were detrimental on the state-owned broadcasting company. As it has been noted before, the efforts of those who believed in a more democratic RAI were suppressed almost from the beginning.

On 23 May 1948, Togliatti, the leader of the PCI's worst fears were confirmed when the Christian Democratic Party overwhelmingly won the national elections. The new coalition government was comprised of the Christian Democratic Party, the Socialist Party, the Liberal and the Republican parties.¹⁶ The Christian Democrats managed to win the overwhelming plurality of the votes for both domestic, as well as international reasons. Propaganda in favour of the Americans and the Christian Democrats was also coming from the USA's large Italian-America population:

Hollywood stars recorded messages of support, rallies were held, and more than one million letters were dispatched to Italy during the election campaign. The letters all stressed the Communist peril, often contained a few dollars and were for the most part not even addressed to relatives.¹⁷

In the United States the Roman Catholic Church also did its part in supporting the propaganda in favour of the DC:

On March 17 Cardinal Spellman, in the presence of President Truman declared, 'and one month from tomorrow as Italy must make her choice of government, I cannot believe that the Italian people...will choose Stalinism over God, Soviet Russia over America, America who has done so much and stands ready and willing to do so much more if Italy remains a free, friendly and unfettered nation.'¹⁸

In Italy as well the Vatican openly supported the DC. On 29 March 1948, Cardinal Siri and some of his colleagues stated that,

it was a mortal sin not to vote or to vote for lists and candidates who do not give sufficient assurances of respecting the rights of God, the Church and mankind; in the local churches the parish priests delivered sermons which were unashamedly electoral addresses for the DC.¹⁹

By the 1950's the Catholic Church had victoriously re-established its place in society, both domestically and internationally. The totalitarian threat caused by Mussolini's regime was gone and, due to the help of the United States, Communism had been successfully marginalized, something that both the Church and *Radio Vaticana* would continue to keep as one of their main political objectives for the next twenty years. With the establishment of the Vatican state in 1929, the opening of *Radio Vaticana* in 1931, the Church's ability to maintain good diplomatic relations with the Allies during the war, and consolidating its support of the DC in the post-war years, the Catholic Church had undisputedly carved its place in the new democratic state, a position that would continue to grow in the next fifty years.

NOTES

¹ Bea, F. (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: Mezzo Secolo della radio del Papa*. Tipografia Pologlotta Vaticana-Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p. 133.

² Loc. Cit.

³ Ibid, p.133-134.

⁴ Loc. Cit.

⁵ "Si lavorava da mattina a sera nell' Archivio dell'Ufficio Informazioni, collocato nella vasta cappella del palazzo San Carlo. Alla parete una grande fotografia di Pio XII nell'atto di abbracciare il Suo popolo sotto l'ormai celebra didascalia: 'Nulla e' perduto con la pace, tutto puo' esserlo con la guerra'. Loc. Cit., p.137.

⁶ "...Le notizie riguardano internati civili, gli equipaggi di piroscafi, religiosi ed altri civili ivi deportati, famiglie dei seminaristi di Propaganda, alle quali viene periodicamente trasmesso un messaggio con notizie dei propri congiunti; cosi' pure si danno notizie di prigionieri di guerra australiani..". *L'Osservatore Romano*, 29 June 1941.

⁷ The Fascist Secret Police.

⁸ *La Chiesa e la Guerra* (1944). Documentazione dell'opera dell'Ufficio Informazioni del Vaticano. Ed. Civitas Gentium, Citta' del Vaticano, p.51. In Bea, F. (1981). *Qui Radio Vaticana: Mezzo Secolo della radio del Papa*. Tipografia Pologlotta Vaticana-Ufficio Propaganda e Sviluppo, p. 139.

⁹ "(La comunicazione ricevuta dalla Sante Sede) ha dissipato l'angoscia sua e di tutta la famiglia disperata dal primo annuncio della gravissima sciagura ed ha riempito il cuore della piu' grande gioia. La diligenza e la speditezza con cui si e' voluto procurarci le notizie del figlio mio diletto danno la prova...che nella Chiesa di Nostro Signore l'aiuto verso gli infelici e i bisognosi e' la pratica di ogni giorno e che nessuno ricorre invano alle inesauribili fonti della Cristiana pietà". Ibid, p. 140.

¹⁰ “Nella tremenda incertezza di giorni angosciosi , vio avete portato un raggio di sole, mi avete ridonato la fiducia di attendere tempi migliori, quando questa guerra sara’ finita e il mio Pinuccio nuovamente a casa”.
Loc. Cit.

¹¹ Ibid, p.143-144. The following breakdown shows a sample of where each broadcast was intended to air:
Monday:-Portuguese to Brasil, Spanish to Central and South America, English to North America,
Lithuanian to North America, Italian, Ukrainian,French, English, Italian, German, Spanish, and Dutch for
Europe. The same breakdown was followed more or less closely for the remainder of the week.

¹² Ibid, p.152.

¹³ Ibid, p.156.

¹⁴ “Con tale inaudito rifiuto la Chiesa si pone a fianco degli ebrei, anglicani, comunisti, contro i vessilliferi dell’Italianita”. *Regime Fascista*, 22 October, 1943. Loc. Cit.

¹⁵ Chiarenza, F. (1978). *Il cavallo morente: trent’anni di radiotelevisione italiana*. Milano: Bompiani, p.25.

¹⁶ The results of the elections were as follows:

<u>PARTY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES</u>
Democrazia Cristiana (DC)	48.48	304
Partito Socialista (PSI)	31.3	183
Partito Repubblicano (PRI)	2.49	9
Partito Liberale (PLI)	3.38	19

¹⁷ Loc. Cit., p 116.

¹⁸ Cannon, R. (1962). *The Cardinal Spellman Story*. Garden City, p.347. In Loc. Cit., p 116.

¹⁹ Loc. Cit., p 117.

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