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Fascism and War

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Abstract and Keywords

This article explores Benito Mussolini's view on fascism and war. War had an essential place in Mussolini's worldview, even before he came to power in 1922. After this, Mussolini showed some realism and opportunism in domestic and foreign policy, but he was first and foremost driven by an ultranationalist, racist, militarist, and Social Darwinist worldview which rested on the fundamental assumption that life is a struggle and war the father of all things. Mussolini believed the twentieth century to be the century of Italy. He failed to assemble his ideas into an all-embracing intellectual system; however, he possessed a sufficiently articulated and coherent worldview, the essence of which was that the nation would be made through war and territorial expansion. Racism was the most radical part of the fascist project to transform Italians into a warrior race.

Keywords: Benito Mussolini, Italian nationalists, territorial expansion, racism, Fascist Italy

WAR had an essential place in Mussolini's world-view even before he came to power. Like many other Italian nationalists he referred to the mutilated victory in the Great War when Italy was denied an empire in the Adriatic at the expense of the Slavs. After he came to power in 1922, Mussolini showed some realism and opportunism in domestic and foreign policy but he was first and foremost driven by an ultranationalist, racist, militarist, and Social Darwinist world-view that rested on the fundamental assumption that life is a struggle and war the father of all things. In his view history was an endless succession of conflicts between elites, states, or tribes. Mussolini believed the twentieth century to be the century of Italy. If the Italians had faith in the new fascist religion and if they submitted to the *Duce* as he fashioned them into a race of conquerors, they would become the fittest among the elites, ready to subvert the order of Versailles and assert their domination in the Mediterranean. None of these conditions was ever fully verified.¹

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It is important to emphasize that Mussolini failed to assemble his ideas into an all-embracing intellectual system; however, he possessed a sufficiently articulated and coherent world-view whose essence was that the nation would be made through war and territorial expansion. This world-view has to be taken seriously for it describes the ideal horizon towards which Mussolini and his regime aimed and allows an appropriate understanding of its failures. Mussolini's myths of revolution and of the nation needed violence to forge a new national community and war to elevate his country's prestige in the world. The domestic revolution Mussolini in vain attempted to realize was to be led by the 'aristocracy of the new civilization' and aimed at the destruction of all rival institutions from Catholic Church to officer corps, from Italian monarchy to the bourgeois way of life. Fascism's national mission was to attain the spiritual and racial unity of all Italians. Racism, which was certainly not imposed by Nazi Germany in the late 1930s, was the most radical part of the fascist project to transform Italians into a warrior race and was also supposed to play an important role in the organization of fascist 'living space' (*spazio vitale*). The ideal type of the new man was to be first and foremost a warrior ready to die for the regime and his *Duce*. He would have been moulded by the PNF youth organizations, would owe loyalty to the *Duce*, not the king and certainly not the pope, he would revel in a martial, violent, fearless, and pitiless universe. Fascism's total war was supposed to result in violent acquisition of a 'living space' wherein the new man would thrive. In this racist 'new order', defeated European, African, and Asian populations would survive in a state of permanent submission which fascism referred to as fascist 'civilization'. Mussolini's fundamental assumption, his myths of the revolution and the nation, revolved around a single, quintessential, catalyst—war. As MacGregor Knox pointed out, under the sign of perpetual struggle, internal and foreign policy, revolution, and war merged. Internal consolidation was a precondition for foreign conquest, and foreign conquest was the decisive prerequisite for revolution at home.²

During the decade 1922–32 the unconsolidated domestic state of the regime hindered any bellicose plan from being carried out. Indispensable to the survival of Mussolini's regime was a temporary agreement with Italian conservative elites (*compromis autoritaire*, in Philippe Burrin's words): the Vatican and the Italian Church, Italian financial and industrial elites, the monarchy, and the army.³ This deal jeopardized the *Duce's* revolutionary aims, and—luckily for the Italians—substantially hindered the degree of fanaticism, decentralization, and movement, violence, and terror which took place in Nazi Germany. The authoritarian compromise did not make of Mussolini a weak dictator nor did it render fascism a disguised Mussolinism. By 1940, Mussolini had accumulated among his offices those of head of government, prime minister, secretary of state, and commander general of the MVSN. He wielded, albeit by proxy, effective powers of command and appropriated the king's prerogatives as commander of the nation's armed forces. Since 1933, he had become chairman of the Supreme Defence Council and Minister of War, the Navy, and the Air Force. In March 1938, together with the king, he was elevated to the rank of 'First Marshal of the Empire'.

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Although until 1943 the army remained obedient to the regime and to its head, the Italian armed forces were not 'Mussolini's army'.⁴ Italian military elites were nationalist, conservative, and monarchist. Italian officers and generals shared nonetheless a number of ideological affinities with the regime such as the experience of the First World War, nationalism, the determination to increase Italy's role in Europe and in the Balkans, the ideas of achieving a mission for the state, of a hierarchical organization of Italian society, and of war as a positive and ineluctable phenomenon in international relations. In order to reach the Great Power status Italy still lacked, they were favourable to the extension of Italy's tiny colonial empire. Italian military elites thought of empire in terms of nineteenth-century European colonial empires, certainly not as racial empire to be established both in Europe and overseas. Italian military elites were beguiled by the same imperialist dream as the Liberal Italian governments while Mussolini attempted, in vain, to pursue a specifically fascist imperialism.

As we shall see, despite having different ideas about empire and colonial rule, and despite the vast failure of the fascistization of the Italian army, Italian military executed the orders emanating from the regime. The nature of the army generals' and officers' consensus on fascism was determined by self-interested reasons such as career advantages offered by the regime; it was also a spontaneous consensus (derived from the above-mentioned affinities) and a dutiful consensus (derived from the allegiance to King Victor Emmanuel III).⁵ The generals and some of the army's cadres wavered between loyalty to the king (and therefore bowed to the will of the *Duce*) and the desire to exploit the opportunities for promotion offered by complicity with the regime. The fascistization of the Regio Esercito (which, as the name indicates was the King's Army) never reached the level of Nazification that the Wehrmacht experienced. The rigidity of service promotion procedures and the caste resistance of senior generals, who maintained a traditional gulf between officers and men, inhibited the injection of fresh fascist blood into the higher reaches of the armed forces. Mussolini chose to consolidate his power by numerous 'changes of the guard' rather than by delegating authority to fascistized younger generations. The Italian armed forces lacked the degree of enthusiasm, ambition, initiative, and radicalization which Hitler fostered in every sector of German society, the army and SS included. Revealingly, the MVSN, which incarnated best of other fascist organizations the military spirit of fascism, played a very minor role in all (p. 242) fascist Italy's wars. The blackshirts were regimented in the army and had no freedom of action.

Mussolini exercised overriding decisional power and control as military leader; he was the pivot of a system as centralized and hierarchical as it was dysfunctional and inefficient. This system enhanced the traditional lack of initiative of Italian military elites; it increased the lack of coordination between the army, the navy, the air force, as well as worsening the pervasive bureaucratic dysfunctions in civilian ministries with military duties (for instance colonial viceroy and governors acted independently from the Minister of the Colonies). In Fascist Italy strategy coincided with the art of warfare typified by the figure of the *condottiere*, who 'drew up plans, made the decisions and carried through the operations'.⁶ Conduct of the war was the *Duce's* political task, with the subservient assistance of a military adviser, the Chief of General Staff, General Pietro Badoglio;

conduct of operations was assigned to the general commands of the army, navy, and air force, these being barely and badly coordinated, not commanded, by the Stato Maggiore Generale (SMG; Joint General Staff). Mussolini emptied the SMG of its functions and took over as Minister of War, delegating the ministerial function to the under-secretaries and to the chiefs of the Stato Maggiore (SM; General Staff) of the army, navy, and air force. Their incumbency of government offices meant that they exercised full control over their forces and removed a further portion of power from the chief of the SMG. At the same time it gave the chiefs of the SM privileged access to Mussolini and further strengthened his power. Following his appointment as First Marshal of the Empire, Mussolini—in a clear insult to the monarch—wrested from the king nominal command of the armed forces in the event of war and then arrogated effective power from the chief of SMG, thereby adding strategic-operational military powers to his political-administrative ones. The chief of SMG, which on 20 May 1941 took the name of *Comando Supremo Interforze* (CS; Supreme Inter-Force Command), was an office head charged with the compilation and issue of orders squeezed between Mussolini and the SM of the armed forces.⁷ Mussolini's refusal to permit centralization outside his own person was supposed to demonstrate his infallibility as *condottiere*. When, in 1940–1, Fascist Italy started losing important battles in Europe and its African empire, the whole system collapsed, for, among other reasons, the myth of Mussolini's infallibility had allowed the military elites to feel irresponsible for defeats and passively to accept military disasters.

Unsurprisingly, the first truly fascist foreign policy act was the failed aggression to annex the island of Corfu in August 1923. This failure, caused by the opposition of Great Britain, pushed Mussolini to seek appropriate rearmament which would (p. 243) allow Fascist Italy to break Italy's alleged encirclement in the Mediterranean Sea. Rearmament began in the 1920s. The gradual increase in the military budget after 1925 financed an air force which, until the mid-1930s, was one of the largest in the world.⁸ From the mid-1920s to 1933 Mussolini pursued a peaceful foreign policy of which the 1925 Treaty of Locarno and the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact are examples. Through a semi-colonial agreement Albania became the first and last fascist European satellite; it would be annexed in 1939. In 1924 the Italo-Yugoslav friendship pact ratified Italy's annexation of Fiume. The treaty did not put an end to Fascist Italy's ambitions to wage war against Yugoslavia, a country that, to Mussolini, epitomized the loathed spirit of Versailles. As a matter of fact secret projects of aggression kept being discussed between Mussolini and General Badoglio from 1927 on. During the 'verbal pacifism' period the regime had no scruples whatsoever about financing and hosting Croat terrorists responsible for the death of King Alexander of Yugoslavia in 1934. The early 1930s *peso determinante* policy (the decisive factor policy, in Dino Grandi's formula) saw Italy successfully play the role of arbiter in the European balance, which also included a web of alliances with small powers such as Austria or Hungary. It was a policy dictated by the circumstances, most notably Fascist Italy's economic and military weakness and an international order hindering any opportunity for expansion by war.⁹ Fascist Italy was buying time, choosing the best moment to act and its indispensable military ally for, even in Mussolini's wildest dreams, fascism could not do without a more powerful partner and aimed at limited territorial

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conquests; a notable difference from Nazism. In 1933, the international context changed and the road to empire and domestic revolution began to open. When Hitler came to power in Germany, he provided Mussolini with the potential partner to pursue his overambitious, disproportionate, unrealistic, expansionist, and totalitarian aims.

In the colonies, the so-called pacification of Libya, an Italian colony since 1911, represented a test of the regime's colonial ambitions, as well as of the relations between the regime and the armed forces. During and in the aftermath of the First World War, Libyans drove Italian garrisons back to coastal enclaves. The last Liberal government had already begun a brutal occupation which the new regime took over. It was only in 1932 that Mussolini and his faithful general Rodolfo Graziani pacified Libya. Fascist pacification meant the killing or starvation of a third of the population especially in Cyrenaica, where the regime aimed at driving the semi-nomadic tribes out of the most fertile lands of the Gebel and at exercising total political-military control over them. This was part of a broader design to (p. 244) destroy the traditional society of the cattle raisers of the Gebel and convert them into a reserve of low-cost and constantly available labour. General Graziani shared with the Fascist and Liberal political establishment the view of nomad societies as an immanent threat who ought to be eradicated rigorously and permanently for they were enemies of agriculture and progress, as well as potential rebels. Graziani interned civilian populations in concentration camps where living conditions were dire and forcefully expelled many others from the best areas of the Gebel to the pre-desert borderlands. The survivors were condemned to barely subsistence-level living conditions. According to Giorgio Rochat, around 100,000 of them, about 50 per cent of the population, were deported and 50,000 died during the repression.¹⁰ The Italian army used chemical weapons during this campaign as it would later do in the war against Ethiopia. In Libya as well as in Ethiopia after 1935, Italian armed forces (and in some cases, civilians too) did not respect the laws of war and infringed conventions signed by Italy both during the war and in its aftermath when Ethiopian resistance was ruthlessly crushed. Crimes committed by Italian soldiers and officers went unpunished for they took place with the authorization and in presence of clear orders emanating from the political authorities and Mussolini. Forceful deportation of civilians became an ordinary instrument for the maintenance of public and colonial order also in Eritrea and Somalia where the system of incarceration, the installation of a racially discriminatory system, inhuman treatment, lack of respect for persons and property, denial of impartial trial, and torture was systematically enforced by Italian armed forces with the direct responsibility of Mussolini and with the acquiescence of the Italian civilian population living in the colonies.¹¹ Fascist Italy's rule in Libya and in its other colonies might not have been radically different from other European colonial policy. Some of the plans for the pacification of Libya had been drafted by the Liberal governments and were executed by the Fascist regime. What is specific to fascist imperialism is that victories in the colonies, repression, and the promulgation of discriminatory legislation served the purpose of enhancing revolution at home. Furthermore, contrary to Liberal imperialism, fascist imperialism aimed at conquering European territories, namely in southeastern Europe, and ruling, directly or indirectly, their white, Christian populations. On this point

historiography is again divided. Richard Bosworth argues that such a thing as fascist imperialism did not exist, for Mussolini was beguiled by the same imperialist dream as his Liberal Italian predecessors. He certainly sought an empire, a nineteenth-century colonial empire, not a racial empire similar to the one Hitler and the Nazi regime's experts dreamt of. As far as the achievements of fascist colonial rule are concerned Bosworth's views are certainly correct: Fascism pursued policies initiated by its Liberal predecessors and one can hardly see the difference (p. 245) between fascist imperialism and other European imperialisms. As far as Fascism's imperialist aims are concerned, they were radically different from Liberal Italy's imperialist objectives: fascism's foreign and imperial conquests were the decisive prerequisite for revolution at home.

In the early 1930s the idea of a war against Ethiopia found enthusiastic supporters in the army, in the foreign and colonial ministries, in the PNF, and also in conservative circles, the monarchy included. As early as 1932, Mussolini encouraged General Emilio De Bono, Minister of the Colonies, to prepare a war of aggression against Ethiopia. In early 1935, it became clear that French politicians who would not tolerate fascist conquests in the Balkans might give Italy a free hand in Africa. Ethiopia represented the first real chance to implement the regime's domestic and foreign revolution. Mussolini did not miss this opportunity. From 1932 to 1935, Italian officers, notably in the air force, battled to get the upper hand in preparing the future war. Italian military's plans did not take into account the political consequences of such an aggression; they had a technical or bureaucratic nature and were not really concerned with empire or the strengthening of the regime. Mussolini allowed his generals and ministers to wage their internecine conflicts and—to paraphrase Ian Kershaw—to 'work towards the *Duce*'; then he decided who, how, when, and for what objectives the war against Ethiopia had to be fought.¹² He ordered the destruction of the Ethiopian armed forces and the total conquest of the country. In early 1935 General Emilio De Bono was in East Africa accompanied by an impressive amount of Italian matériel and units. Mussolini intended not to repeat the shameful defeat of Adwa and to display to the Italians and the whole world fascist military power. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers were hastily dispatched to Ethiopia and the colonial war became national. Badoglio, who replaced De Bono in 1936, marched into Addis Ababa in May. He won the war thanks to the Italian superiority in men, armaments, and matériel. The Ethiopian war was not a typical colonial conflict, fought by a small expeditionary corps, possibly aided by African troops, with very limited military objectives and planned for the long term.¹³ Sending so many soldiers was a deliberate attempt to involve Italian cities, towns, and villages, fascist propaganda and mass media, schools, vicars and parishes, and Italian industries. Fascist Italy eventually managed to avenge the 1896 defeat suffered by Liberal Italy against the Ethiopians. Mussolini won a risky gamble thanks only to Great Britain's and France's acquiescence in such a brutal aggression against an extra-European state which was not a possession of theirs.

Mussolini's abrupt change of strategy and of objective vastly raised the cost of war. The conquest of Ethiopia also involved an extremely violent and expensive (p. 246) period of pacification during which the repression previously experimented with in Libya was practised on an even larger scale. General Graziani, who executed the orders of Mussolini

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and the new Minister of the Colonies, Alessandro Lessona, was responsible for the murderous excesses that took place in Ethiopia after 1936. On 1 September 1939, total occupation and vast-scale repression demanded the employment of 200,000 men, a number corresponding to the total of the Italian army in peacetime.¹⁴ One of the most controversial historiographical aspects of the war was the use of chemical weapons, wrongly referred to as gas. According to the two most acknowledged experts on that topic, Angelo Del Boca and Giorgio Rochat, Italian artillery caused the bulk of Ethiopian victims. Mustard gas and phosphorous bombs, launched by the Italian air force—who received undisputedly clear orders from Mussolini, Badoglio, and Graziani—hit both civilian and military objectives. The criminal use of these illegal weapons certainly contributed to the fascist victory, although it was not essential to it.¹⁵

With the backing of the political and military establishment and an acquiescent monarchy, Mussolini decided on military intervention in the Spanish Civil War. He did not consult the king but obtained a public approval from a marginalized Badoglio. The *Duce* was now seeking the keys to the western Mediterranean. Fascist propaganda played up anti-bolshevism, although the aim of the fascist military enterprise in Spain was mainly expansionist: the Balearic Islands, Ceuta, and converting Franco's Spain into a satellite of Rome. Fascist Italy massively intervened with almost 50,000 men (20,000 from the army and 29,000 from the militia). They were almost all volunteers, attracted less by ideology than by the good money they could make. In March 1937 Republican propaganda successfully portrayed the Italian effort at Guadalajara as a defeat bigger than it was in reality; later, during summer 1937, Italian troops won many significant battles, especially in the Basque region. Franco eventually won the war although Spain never became a satellite of Rome. For an aspirant Great Power like Italy the price paid for the intervention was very high: from 1936 to 1939, 3,266 soldiers died, 11,000 were wounded, and more than six billion lira were spent on war matériel largely lost.

Wars in Africa and in Spain allowed the fascist regime to enhance its schemes of social engineering through drastically racist colonial legislation, the radicalization of the discrimination against national Slav minorities, the eventual promulgation of anti-Semitic laws in 1938, and a related 'war' against the 'bourgeois spirit' of the Italians.¹⁶ Despite the regime's efforts, prior to 1940, the 'stay-at-home preference' (*politica del piede di casa*), perhaps the 'bourgeois spirit', largely prevailed (p. 247) over a fascist determination among the population and the majority of the fascist hierarchs. Immediately following Italy's entry into the war, Mussolini was forced to admit that the Italians were far from being the race of conquerors whom he envisioned. The Party, he complained, had failed in the fascistization of Italian society; 'the aristocracy of the new civilization', he conceded, was far from being ready to assume power. The king and the Regio Esercito had not been replaced by a fascist popular army. Nevertheless, the *Duce* did not relinquish his revolutionary and expansionist ambitions but used the King's Army, which he controlled and commanded, to pursue them.

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After the victorious war in Ethiopia, Mussolini encouraged the Anschluss, pushed for the Rome–Berlin Axis, and risked war in the Czechoslovak crisis of 1938. Since 1938 Berlin had economically and politically penetrated the whole Danube basin which represented the only directly accessible source of raw materials for Italy, with its Austrian communication routes, Romanian oil, Hungarian cereals, and Yugoslav and Bulgarian minerals and timber. Rome was economically and politically excluded from the richest region of its claimed 'living space'. On 15 March 1939 Mussolini issued an ultimatum to King Zog of Albania; then, on a specious pretext, Italian troops occupied Albania, which on 8 April became an Italian protectorate. On the one hand the manoeuvre demonstrated to the Western powers that Rome took its decisions regardless of Germany's wishes and warned Berlin that Fascist Italy had not renounced its expansionist ambitions in the Balkans. On the other hand, as a consequence of the impossibility of competing with Germany in the Balkans, Italy now plainly had to focus on military expansion elsewhere in the Mediterranean, which meant a probable showdown with London and Paris. On 22 May 1939 Italy and Germany signed the Pact of Steel. The Italian Foreign Minister, Galeazzo Ciano, foolishly left the task of drawing up the treaty to the Germans, who contrived for its article 3 to place Italy at the mercy of Germany's decision when war would be declared. When Ciano made it plain that Italy would not be ready to enter the war until 1943 he received only vague reassurances from his counterpart Ribbentrop. No article, nor indeed any clause, of this alliance stipulated that Germany must not act before 1943 when, supposedly, Italy would be ready to wage war in Europe. The objective of the alliance was not stated nor was any formal recognition made of Italy's and Germany's respective spheres of influence. There was no protocol that defined frontiers apart from the declared inviolability of the Brenner, and no jointly defined military strategy. Despite all the risks involved in the alliance, if Fascist Italy looked to gain total mastery of the Mediterranean, Nazi Germany was the only plausible ally.

By the end of 1939 the Ethiopian and Spanish wars had heavily affected the Italian military budget, its reserves of matériel and armament. They drained resources, impossible for Italian industry to replace and needed for the development and modernization of the armed forces. The Italian military elite completely failed to understand the importance of new technology and overestimated Italian matériel (p. 248) and technological capability. Italy's generals imposed a military-technical, tactical, and operational conservatism even more deadening than that of their French counterparts. Until it was too late, the army neglected medium tanks; the navy disdained radar; and the air force opposed the all-metal monoplane fighter. Inadequate training, doctrinal lethargy, administrative disorganization, and the active discouragement of individual creativity produced a junior officer corps with insufficient capacity for command and non-commissioned officers with an almost total absence of initiative.¹⁷ Successes in the fascist wars from 1935 to 1939, as well as the conservatism of the military elites and Mussolini's damaging centralization of all military powers, compromised the preparation for the European conflict to come.

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Being a medium-size military power, Italy could have pursued a limited war with limited expansionist objectives. The Italian armies were structured in such a way that they could wage a lightning war (*una guerra di rapido corso*) against a small or medium-size enemy with an equivalent level of equipment and training. Fascist Italy could not open independent war fronts, directly challenge France or Great Britain militarily, or compete with Nazi Germany's economic penetration in Central and south-eastern Europe. Before 1 September 1939, Italy lacked any serious military plan in the event of a war against France or Great Britain (not to mention against the Soviet Union and the United States). Its response to any Anglo-French attack would be the defence of its frontiers combined with an attack against Greece and a probable second offensive against Yugoslavia after fomenting internal uprisings. Thus, any aggression against Italy was to be countered by an offensive against third countries, not against the aggressors themselves: a strategy with a political significance inconsistent with the regime's foreign policy. When, on 23 August 1939, the announcement of a German-Soviet Pact was made, Mussolini informed Hitler that, if the conflict against Poland remained localized, Italy would give Germany the political and economic support that it requested. But if the conflict spread, Italy could not take any military initiative unless Germany delivered the military supplies and raw materials that Italy required to resist an attack by the French and the British. Fabbriguerra (abbreviation for Commissariato Generale per la Fabbricazione di Guerra which procured raw materials and allocated them among factories requisitioned for the war effort) estimated that such resistance would require 17,000 train-loads of materials and supplies, a request Berlin could only refuse. Humiliated at being obliged to acknowledge Italy's lack of preparedness for war, the *Duce* proclaimed Italy's 'non-belligerence'.

Six months of uneasy waiting followed. On 10 March 1940, Mussolini informed Ribbentrop that Italy intended to wage a 'parallel war' in the Mediterranean but it would do so only after Germany's western offensive had begun. On 18 March (p. 249) Mussolini announced to Hitler that he alone would decide the date of Italy's entry into the war. A secret memorandum circulated by Mussolini on 31 March 1940 confirmed that his policy was one of defence on land (except in Ethiopia and, as regards only air bases, against France in Corsica). The memorandum also outlined the *Duces* plans for an offensive in the Balkans, as well as a general maritime offensive, which was wholly incongruous given the lack of terrestrial objectives. This was an indirect strategy by which the threat of war served the purpose of political and diplomatic, more than military, coercion. The German occupation of Denmark, the defeat of Norway, the offensive against Holland and Belgium, and the collapse of France persuaded Mussolini that the time had come for Italy to enter the war. Fascist military engagement was to be above all rapid in its consummation. Fascist Italy's grand objectives increased Italy's military dependence on Germany, for the timing of intervention would be determined by the success of the German offensive—with the added danger (which, in fact, transpired) that Italy's contribution would not be of sufficient magnitude to justify its claims to territory.

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Mussolini's strategy intended to achieve absolute freedom of action, with the consequence that political considerations took priority over operational ones.

Army commanders ought to have been aware of the risks involved with this choice but raised no objections; reassured by the king's acquiescence, they did as the *Duce* wanted. The doctrine of Italy's absolute freedom of action from Germany was summed up in the notion of the 'parallel war'—independent and brief military action which Italy would wage rapidly and ruthlessly before sitting down at the peace table. It was to be a war which did not overlap or even mesh with the greater and more general conflict. Rather, it was a campaign with its own and specifically Italian objectives, and it had nothing to do with the present adversaries. It was to be fought not for Germany, nor with Germany, but alongside Germany. Parallel war confirmed the gulf between Italy's expansionist ambitions and the instruments available for their accomplishment. Italy rejected any form of strategic collaboration with Berlin, so that the fascists might demonstrate their military prowess to the German ally, to the nation, and to the world. Should this strategy prove successful, Italy could cash it in at the peace table for territorial gains. Should it not, given that Italy's armed forces were very far from war-ready, that the economy was unprepared for long-drawn-out conflict, and that Hitler's real intentions were still unknown, the preconditions for humiliating military defeat were present from the beginning.

On 10 June 1940, Italy declared war against France and Great Britain. After the defeat of France and in view of Britain's difficulties, the regime believed its expansionist ambitions could be easily realized. On 17 June, Hitler announced to Mussolini that France had sued for armistice. The *Duce* reacted by ordering Badoglio to attack France within three days. The Italian military campaign against France started on 20 June and lasted for four days; the French defended themselves exceptionally well against a surprise attack that left more than 600 dead and more than 2,000 wounded (p. 250) on the Italian side. The most 'brilliant achievement by the Italian troops was the occupation of the town of Menton and of some small communes in the French Alps. On 24 June Italy and France signed the armistice at Villa Incisa (Rome). Italy's 'only demands were the creation of a 50-kilometre demilitarized zone to the west of Italy's frontier and the military occupation of the communes conquered during the campaign. The Italians also wanted demilitarization of the strongholds and naval bases of Toulon, Bizerte, Ajaccio, and Mers-el-Kebir. The armistice of 24 June heavily conditioned relations between Italy and France. Germany was in no hurry to reach peace with France, because the uncertainty of the armistice made the country easier to control. Mussolini would have liked to impose a harsh armistice and to settle straightaway the territorial question with France. He was in a hurry to reach a conclusion because the passage of time heightened the uncertainty and frailty of his ambitious hopes.¹⁸ Fascist Italy had lost a crucial portion of its Mediterranean 'living space', and the uneasy military victory in the Alps made it impossible for Italy to sit at the peace table as an outright victor.

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Fascist Italy was forced to seek its fortune in northern Africa and the Balkans. Only on 13 September did General Graziani attack the British positions in western Egypt and manage to occupy Sidi el-Barrani. But after this first advance—hailed as a ‘Roman triumph’ by the regime’s propaganda machine and by the General himself—the Italians failed to proceed further. If they had accepted the two armoured divisions offered by Hitler, events might have turned out otherwise. But Mussolini rejected Hitler’s offer: he wanted an entirely Italian victory and he refused to countenance any deviation from the fundamental principle of the ‘parallel war’. By February 1941, which was when the five divisions of the German Afrikakorps arrived in northern Africa under the command of General Erwin Rommel, the Italian troops had lost the whole of Cyrenaica, and the British had captured more than 130,000 soldiers and disabled all the Italians’ tanks and 1,000 of their aircraft. In East Africa, on 5 May 1941, the British triumphantly escorted the Emperor Haile Selassie into Addis Ababa; and on 21 May the Duke of Aosta was forced to capitulate. As regards the Balkan theatre of war, Mussolini informed Hitler that Italy was ready to launch an attack against Greece. The latter enjoined his ally not to undertake any military operations there. As absolute master of the economies of the Balkan countries, the Reich was concerned to keep the region out of the war and it had no need—unlike Italy—to assert its hegemony in the concrete form of direct military occupation. Ever more dependent on Germany, Rome received no guarantees from Berlin that it would have access to the supplies—steel, oil, and coal—essential for its prosecution of the war.

The failure of operations against Britain, postponed *sine die* in September 1940, and the German occupation of Romania (on 12 October, and which the Italians (p. 251) had known about several weeks beforehand), increased Italian fears that the war was about to conclude with a negotiated peace between London and Berlin from which Rome would be excluded. For this reason, heedless of Hitler’s veto of July, Mussolini chanced his hand on achieving rapid victory in Greece. The Italian political and military leaders were perfectly aware of Greece’s domestic and international political situation. Reports by the War Ministry depicted the country as anything but poorly armed and nowhere near internal collapse. Nevertheless, at a meeting on 15 October 1940, Mussolini and his closest advisers agreed that the occupation of Greece would be entirely straightforward. The military objective was possession of Greece’s western coast, Zante, Cephalonia, Corfu, and Salonika, then to proceed with the complete occupation of the country, an act that would ensure that it would remain within Italy’s political-economic space. Italian generals dared not explain to Mussolini that Greece was impossible to defeat with the meagre military means allocated to the campaign (an expeditionary force of 60,000 men) or that the demobilization of 300,000 soldiers (between the end of 1940 and the beginning of 1941) would render any rapid reinforcement of the front in Greece practically impossible. The politicians, too, bore heavy responsibility for the miscalculation, Ciano most of all: for in the hope of increasing his prestige and power and considering Albania some sort of personal fief, he claimed that Italy had the Albanians’ support, that the Greeks had little stomach for a fight, and that a pro-Italian faction in Athens was ready to oust the Ioannis Metaxas government. There was not a grain of truth in any of Ciano’s assertions and

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consequently Italy launched an attack against Greece with only five divisions, without the support of the Bulgarians, and without the advantage of surprise. The Greek campaign was an utter disaster. An advance from the Albanian frontier to Epirus while fighting an enemy defending its homeland and during an early and particularly harsh winter was bound to fail. The expeditionary force astonishingly continued to fight but, given the situation, little by little, it disintegrated into a rabble: of its 500,000 soldiers, 32,000 were killed and more than 100,000 wounded. At the same time, the British disabled part of the Italian fleet in the Bay of Taranto (12 November 1940) and regained control over the seaways of the southern Mediterranean. Confronted by such losses, Mussolini thus had to resign himself to accepting Germany military assistance.

By May 1941 Italy's war initiative in Africa and in Europe was over. Germany attacked Yugoslavia and Greece. Between 6 and 23 April, both countries were defeated; armistices were signed, and on 24 April, in Vienna, Yugoslavia was erased from the map of Europe, its territory being militarily occupied or annexed by Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary, Albania, and Italy, while Croatia obtained its independence. When the Italians suggested to the Germans that their respective spheres of influence might be established according to a rigid division of geographical zones (Yugoslavia and Greece to Italy, all the rest to the Germany), the Germans rejected the proposal and obliged their junior partner to accept the principle of each of the (p. 252) two powers 'prevalence'¹⁹ in a particular zone, so that Germany could maintain a presence in those areas controlled by Italy. However much fascist propaganda might proclaim the priority of Italy's interests in the Balkans, there was no doubt that the Reich had absolute superiority. Since 1941 Berlin could have obliged Rome to place the Italian army under the command of the Germans. Yet Berlin had permitted Italy to occupy large areas of territory and to settle the political question and the boundary dispute with the Croats as it wished. Italy's negligible economic significance but extensive sphere of military occupation gave Nazi propagandists an opportunity to rebut accusations of German hegemony and purvey the idea that the Axis allies were co-participants in the 'new order'. Between May 1941 and July 1943 Italy accepted Germany's real supremacy and the actually demeaning role granted by the ally. With only a narrow margin for initiative, but paradoxically thanks to the magnanimity of the Germans, Italy had gained a nominal foothold in the Balkans.

Italy was now fighting what was—to use Giorgio Rochat's apt expression—a 'subordinate war as regards its interests. The actual and partial occupation of the 'living space' came about in circumstances that differed entirely from those envisaged by fascist expansionism. Once the Italians gained a foothold in the Balkans and later in metropolitan France, they sought to carve out a broader role for themselves than their ally was willing to grant. The progress of the war, the direct and indirect influence exerted by Germany, Fascist Italy's military weakness, its inability to deal with unexpected situations or to adapt to them, led to the humiliating defeat and ultimate failure of fascism's war. In order that Italy might share in the Axis's eventual victory and true to his promise to march with Hitler 'until the end', in the years that followed Mussolini sent an Italian expeditionary force (Corpo di Spedizione Italiano in Russia, later Armata Italiana in Russia) to the Soviet Union. In 1942 and 1943, around half of the

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200,000 Italian soldiers fighting at the Russian front died in battle and many others were lost or taken prisoner. In northern Africa, the defeat at El Alamein in early November 1942 was only a prelude to large-scale advances by the Allies, whose landings in Morocco and Algeria led to the loss of Libya and to headlong retreat by the Axis troops in Tunisia. At the end of 1942 the Axis war effort in the Mediterranean was in disarray, while the capitulation of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad on 31 January 1943 had marked a turning point in continental Europe as well. The question was no longer whether the Axis would lose the war but when. It was the Allied landings in Africa—these being taken to be a crucial change of circumstances with respect to the armistice of 1940—that induced Germany to occupy the whole of France and invite Italy to join the operations mounted on 11 and 12 November 1942. It was action by the Germans, not Italy's own military initiative, which enabled it to occupy almost all the territory as far as the Rhône originally intended for annexation. The Italian troops, given the task of maintaining (p. 253) the order established by the Germans, deployed themselves along the line of the Rhône as well as in Corsica.

Unlike the Germans, who could be and were defeated after their conquests, the Italians were defeated in advance but became conquerors of Greece, vast areas of Yugoslavia, and metropolitan France. It was politically as difficult for the Italians to impose themselves as winners as it was militarily. They could have defended the annexed territories around Menton, Dalmatia, and the Ionian Islands and eventually put down what were still unorganized and uncoordinated resistance movements. The decision to occupy extensive areas of territory required first sending a significant number of men. The soldiers deployed in the Mediterranean territories conquered after 1940 numbered approximately 850,000, which amounted to two-thirds of all troops committed outside Italian borders. The Balkans constantly absorbed 650,000 men and the occupation of southern France and Corsica required a further 200,000. Undoubtedly such a number, as well as those in the ARMIR sent to Soviet Union, weakened the defence of the peninsula. The deployment also required the adjustment of logistics and armaments to the new circumstances. For almost two years Italian armies in occupied Europe fought a guerrilla warfare they were totally unprepared for, despite the experience of the large number of colonial veterans still in armed service. The extremely mobile and logistically agile enemy, who operated in small units and mingled with the civilian population after operations, caused great difficulties for the large Italian units burdened by heavy artillery. The difficulties were worsened by the excessive dispersal of forces in order to defend numerous logistical bases and communication routes, the slowness due to heavy and cumbersome equipment, and the need to ensure that all supply lines were secure. Moreover, the enemy was often well informed about the deployment and movement of the Italian units and the operational intentions of their commanders, while the Servizi Informazioni (where *Informazione* signifies intelligence services), one of the worst among Western European countries, were incapable of furnishing timely and accurate information. With the evolution of the conflict the average size of the Italian battalions, commanded by reservist officers, diminished to around 4,000 men, with weaponry and equipment rarely and

inefficiently replaced and increasingly less suited to the manifold requirements of the war.

The military subordination of the Italian occupation forces in Mediterranean Europe deepened with the defeats suffered by the Axis. Until the end of 1942, the Germans left the Italians a semblance of command and a limited margin of autonomy in military decisions which was deemed unacceptable by the generals of the army, resentful of what they regarded as a humiliation. The *Führer's* Instruction no. 47 of 28 December 1942 put an end to the Italians scant freedom of manoeuvre in the occupied territories. The German commanders doubted the Italian occupying forces could resist and defend the territories under their control from an Allied landing. After spring 1943 the Italian armies in Greece and Yugoslavia were literally kept under German supervision. As combat continued, an ill-concealed case of (p. 254) rivalry ruled out any possibility of collaboration between the two Axis partners. The psychological impact of Italy's downgrading from equal to junior partner in the Axis provoked resentful defiance of German supremacy. This attitude of both civilian and military elites was irrational because Italy was, by 1941, a de facto satellite of the Reich which, rather than be left with nothing, accepted whatever Germany might concede. Certainly influenced, perhaps befuddled, by fascist ideology, Mussolini and the regime's leadership refused to accept subordination to Germany. They denied to themselves the idea that Italy was in fact Germany's servant and satellite and from 1941 to 1943 they reacted with determination against all German encroachments on Italian sovereignty and interests. This was particularly the case in the occupied territories where Italian civil and military authorities deluded themselves into believing that they controlled what actually was an imaginary fascist 'living space'.

Italian commanders did not sabotage the regime. Until 25 July 1943, and for different reasons under the RSI, with conscientiousness and even stubbornness, they persevered until matters were resolved, working all the while 'towards the *Duce*'. The Italian army showed no reluctance to fight nor any meekness towards their enemies, while its commanders strove to adapt their men and means to guerrilla warfare and to political situations objectively difficult to deal with. They were certainly not defeatists or careless and many of them were convinced of the superiority of the 'Italian race'. In the practice of repression, the Italian army's actions were similar in kind to those of the Wehrmacht, the SS, and the German police. The orders issued by the Italian authorities to crush the partisan bands and to root out support for them in the civilian population envisaged a wide range of measures: hostage taking, the burning of entire villages, reprisals against the families of suspected insurgents, the evacuation of large inhabited areas, the deforestation of zones considered particularly hospitable to partisan formations, the deportation of large groups of civilians, the seizure and killing of livestock—and all these actions with impunity for any excesses that might be committed.²⁰ The main difference between the two armies concerned their efficiency; in the Italian case, at the end of an operation the number of civilian casualties was generally lower, the uncontrolled

impulses were erratic and certainly less fanatical. This brings us to the question of fascism's successful indoctrination of the Italian army (or its fascistization).

Italian commanders were perfectly aware that soldiers were far from being the fascist conquering race and were unprepared to face a long war or military occupations. Italian armies were framed to fight conventional and short military campaigns, not resistance movements and guerrilla warfare. In order to face this situation Italian commanders-in-chief reacted vigorously. Circular note 3C(1 March (p. 255) 1942) written by General Mario Roatta, commander-in-chief of 2nd Army, is a general instruction explaining the methods of repression as well as a guide to soldiers' attitude towards occupied populations.²¹ Roatta ordered his troops always to keep a warlike mentality and to repress all the qualities of the 'good Italian (*il buon italiano* or *bono'taliano*). Soldiers had to behave fearlessly in all circumstances and harshly fight the enemy. Rebels had to be treated not just according to the saying 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, but taking a 'head for a tooth'. Roatta resorted to a simple and not quintessentially fascist psychology, probably because he was aware of the failed attempt to fascistize the Italian army. He threatened harsh punishments for all those disobeying his orders, insulted the enemy, and pushed his troops to be extremely mistrustful about local populations. The general explained to his troops that victorious nations attitude towards defeated populations was a superior-inferior-based relation. Roatta deliberately attempted to instil into his soldiers' minds the idea that the partisan-enemy as well as civilians supporting the partisans were non-human and uncivilized, barbarians. Hence, it was absolutely forbidden to fraternize with them.²² General Roatta wrote that Italian soldiers were fighting in the Balkans a colonial kind of war. As in the colonies, it was necessary to deploy massive forces and powerful means even in minor military operations. In annexed Slovenia and Dalmatia massive internment of civilians and a scorched earth policy, analogous to repression methods previously practised in Cyrenaica, were determined by a fascist plan of *sbalcanizzazione* (de-Balkanization), and *bonifica etnica* (ethnic cleansing, as we would say today), and anticipated the Italian colonization of eastern Adriatic territories.

It must be pointed out that Roatta's circular note 3C did not represent an isolated case, and orders having a similar content were promoted also in Greece. Roatta's ideas were not those of a general more fervently fascist than other Italian com-manders.²³ Many such high-ranking officers shared the convictions and ideals of the Fascist political establishment and of Mussolini. However, this being the most significant difference from the German soldiers, there is no such evidence with regard to the Italian junior officers and troops in the occupied territories. Many of them executed orders fearing the consequences of a refusal, because of their sense of duty and not for ideological reasons. Yet, on frequent occasions, they were brutal and committed war crimes. If Italian soldiers' crimes—which, for various reasons, were not much brought to light after the war—cannot be directly ascribed to fascist ideology, or to regime propaganda, how are we supposed to explain them? They (p. 256) can certainly be attributed to General Staff orders which succeeded in convincing many Italian soldiers that moral, juridical, and military laws were not in force anymore and the occupiers were entitled to enforce a

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pitiless vengeance and the most brutal reprisals against civilian populations.²⁴ As far as the case of the Balkan occupied territories is concerned, they were also the result of a deep-rooted anti-Slav racism widespread among civil servants and officers dispatched to the Balkans. More than any other thing they were determined by the context and condition of the occupation. The violence of repression of partisans and reprisals against civilian populations reflected Fascist Italy's army's substantial weakness. They were the result of an army forced to defend itself against Resistance movements more efficiently equipped, more experienced, and more determined to win a war that, since the end of 1942, was irremediably lost by the Italians.

The Italian army's lamentable performance in 1940–3 derived in part from institutional failure and in part from the backwardness of Italian society compared with that of its ally and enemies. From a military point of view Italian strategies were contradictory and ill conceived: passivity of the CS contrasted with the frantic opening of theatres of war scattering meagre resources from the Channel coast to Ethiopia, from metropolitan France to the Balkans and Soviet Union. The effectiveness of the high command was limited, both because Italian armed forces repeatedly demonstrated its structural and intellectual incapacity in mobile and tactical warfare and because of the structural hierarchy moulded by Mussolini. The regime and military elites showed deference to large industrial combines that produced the least effective, most expensive, and fewest armaments of any major combatant in the Second World War. The regime also failed to decree general mobilization in 1940 as its Liberal predecessor had unhesitatingly done in 1915. Between June 1940 and 8 September 1943 the armed forces condemned to death fewer than 150 men, much fewer than from 1915 to 1918. For the commanding heights of a regime that boasted about modernization, both Mussolini and the Italian generals showed a remarkable incapacity to grasp the importance of technology and resources. The regime failed to rally Italian society, big business, and armed forces to its most important expansionist and revolutionary war, and the willingness to die for the *Duce* diminished rapidly and the home front crumbled after 1940. The effect of the military on fascism was very relevant. The army was a decisive factor in fascism's coming to power in 1922–5 and an inescapable part of its inheritance. During the 1920s the conservative elites restricted Mussolini's war ambitions; the highest ranks in the army and civil service stood firm and avoided a war against Yugoslavia, Turkey, and sweeps into France. After the 1936 victorious war in Ethiopia, the conservative elites were either trapped by the alliance or fully supported the regime. (p. 257) Fascistization of the army was a huge failure. However the King's Army shared the responsibility of defeat with Mussolini and the regime and was responsible for war crimes that went and are still unpunished.

When examining how hell-bent fascism was on war and what sort of wars it engaged in and why, it is important to keep in mind the vast discrepancy between fascism's achievements and its foolishly ambitious aims. Fascism came into being as a direct consequence of the First World War and disappeared because of the military defeat during the Second World War. Mussolini and his regime miserably failed to achieve both domestic and expansionist objectives. Despite this failure, fascism's domestic wars resulted in the harsh persecution of its political enemies, innocent Slovene and Croat

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minorities as well as Italian and foreign Jews. Ideologically driven wars waged by Italian Fascism were murderous and resulted in hundreds of thousands of victims and the premature death of a million people, especially civilians, in the colonies of Libya, Eritrea, and Somalia, in Ethiopia, in Spain, in Albania, in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Greece, in metropolitan France, Tunisia, and the ex-Soviet Union. The blood tribute paid by the Italian 'conquerors' was high, too. Hundreds of thousands of Italian soldiers fell for or because of the regime's wars.

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Notes:

(1) The reader must be aware that historians' interpretations of fascism as a regime and Mussolini's role as a dictator are divergent. The historiographical debate is ongoing and my views are controversial. I rely upon the studies of MacGregor Knox, Philippe Burrin, Enzo Collotti, Emilio Gentile, Pierre Milza, and of Italian military historians such as Lucio Ceva, Fortunato Minniti, and Giorgio Rochat (see bibliography). Alternative answers to those I provide to the question of why fascism engaged in a number of wars are plausible; they are expressed, for instance, by the editor of this Handbook, Richard Bosworth. See for instance his chapter in this Handbook, his *Mussolini's Italy: Life under the Dictatorship, 1915-1945* (New York; Penguin Books, 2006), his *Mussolini* (London: Arnold, 2002). On the contrary, as far as the account of fascist wars is concerned, I argue that the

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views expressed in this chapter are not contentious and are generally shared by historians.

- (2) M. Knox, *Common Destiny: Dictatorships, Foreign Policy, and War in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 62, 109.
- (3) P. Burrin, *Fascisme, nazisme et autoritarisme* (Paris: Seuil, 2000).
- (4) I paraphrase the title of O. Bartov's book *Hitler's Army. Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- (5) F. Minniti, 'Gli ufficiali di carriera dell'Esercito nella crisi del regime', in A. Ventura (ed.), *Sulla crisi del regime fascista 1938-1943: la società italiana dal 'consenso' alla Resistenza* (Venice: Marsilio, 1996), 75-123.
- (6) F. Minniti, 'Profili dell'iniziativa strategica italiana dalla non belligeranza alla guerra parallela', *Storia contemporanea*, 23 (1987), 1113-97. G. Rochat, *Lesercito italiano in pace e in guerra* (Milan: Rara, 1991).
- (7) The efficiency or otherwise of this arrangement has been dealt exhaustively by Lucio Ceva, MacGregor Knox, and Giorgio Rochat (see bibliography).
- (8) Knox, *Common Destiny*, 120-1.
- (9) This interpretation of fascist foreign policy is challenged, among others, by Bosworth who claims that neither in domestic nor in foreign policy did fascism truly innovate. He is sceptical of claims that Mussolini initiated a radical break in Italy's foreign policy and makes a case for the essential continuity of Italian foreign policy from the late nineteenth century through the Fascist decades, of which the *peso determinate* policy was an expression.
- (10) G. Rochat, *Guerre italiane in Libia e in Etiopia* (Treviso: Pagus, 1991), 5-6, 84-5.
- (11) N. Labanca, 'Colonial Rule, Colonial Repression and War Crimes in the Italian Colonies', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9 (2004), 300-13. A. Del Boca, *Italiani brava gente?* (Vicenza: Neri Pozzi Editore, 2005), 105-228.
- (12) I. Kershaw, "'Working towards the Führer": Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship', in I. Kershaw and M. Lewin (eds), *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorship in Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 80-106.
- (13) With two divisions each of 12,500 men, colonial troops especially Eritrean played an important role during the war and during the brutal repression that followed it.
- (14) G. Rochat, *Le guerre italiane 1935-1943: dall'impero d'Etiopia alla disfatta* (Turin: Einaudi, 2005), 89.

(15) Rochat, *Guerre italiane in Libia e in Etiopia*; A. Del Boca (ed.), *I gas di Mussolini* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1996).

(16) M. Sarfatti, *The Jews in Mussolini's Italy: From Equality to Persecution* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

(17) M. Knox, 'Expansionist Zeal, Fighting Power, and Staying in Power in the Italian and German Dictatorships', in R. Bessel (ed.), *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Comparison and Contrasts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 113–33; 120.

(18) E. Collotti, 'L'Italia dall'intervento alla guerra parallela', in *L'Italia nella Seconda Guerra Mondiale e nella Resistenza* (Milan: F. Angeli, 1988), 37.

(19) In Nazi parlance, 'prevalence' meant that there would be German troops and emissaries in Italian zones; and vice versa, Italian troops and emissaries in German ones.

(20) E. Collotti, 'Sulla politica di repressione italiana nei Balcani', in L. Paggi (ed.), *La memoria del nazismo nell'Europa di oggi* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1997), 186–8, 198, 203.

(21) It has to be emphasized that the document was divulged well before the partisans military actions undermined the Italian occupation system.

(22) M. Legnani, 'Il ginger del general Roatta, le direttive della II^o Armata sulla repressione antipartigiana in Slovenia e Croazia', *Italia contemporanea*, 209–10 (1997–8), 156–74.

(23) D. Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire: Italian Occupation during the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and L. Santarelli, 'Muted Violence: Italian War Crime in Occupied Greece', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9 (2004), 280–99.

(24) F. Focardi and L. Klinkhammer, 'The Question of Fascist Italy's War Crimes: The Construction of Self-Acquitting Myth (1943–1948)', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9 (2004), 330–48, and M. Battini, 'Sins of Memory: Reflections on the Lack of an Italian Nuremberg and the Administration of International Justice after 1945', *ibid.* 349–62.

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