
Fascism as Political Religion

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Fascism as Political Religion

In modern society, secularization has not produced a definitive separation between the spheres of religion and politics. With the development of mass politics, the boundaries between these two spheres have often become confused, and on these occasions politics has assumed its own religious dimension. At the same time as this process of secularization within both the state and society, there has also been a 'sacralization of politics', which reached its highest point in the totalitarian movements of the twentieth century. Nazism, fascism and romantic nationalism all made decisive contributions to the 'sacralization of politics'; but democracy, socialism and communism have also contributed to the birth of new secular cults. The religious aspects of mass movements such as nazism have already been studied, whilst we do not yet have an in-depth study of fascism from this point of view. This article does not claim to provide such a study; merely to put forward some considerations on the importance and function of political religion within fascism.

There has always been an interest in this field: as early as the 1920s some researchers focused their attention on fascism's rituals and symbols, claiming that they were examples of a secular religiousness, which they viewed as one of the more original aspects of the movement, as well as being one of the factors behind its success. Fascism 'has the rudiments of a new religion', wrote Schneider and Clough in 1929, but 'whether or not these will grow remains to be seen, but certainly there can be no doubt that already this new cult has taken some hold of the Italians' heart and imagination'.¹

In 1932, Mussolini declared that the fascist state had not created its own god, as Robespierre had done, but it had recognized 'the god of ascetics, saints and heroes, and also the God which is seen and worshipped by the primitive and genuine heart of the people'. He also added that whilst the fascist state did not have its own theology, it did have its own morality.²

In reality, fascism had not restricted itself to venerate God in traditional terms, but had intervened directly within the religious sphere. Its interest in religion was exclusively political and not theological, just as its privileged recognition of the Catholic Church was due to its pragmatic use of religion as an *instrumentum regni*. But as Herman Finer has observed, the very fact of claiming that the state had its own morality meant that fascism evoked the existence of its own divinity, which was the inspiration of fascist morality, and effectively put itself forward as a new religion.³ In fact fascism, due to its own totalitarian concept of politics, took upon itself the prerogative of defining the meaning and ultimate aim as regards the lives of millions of men and women. Consequently, fascism constructed its own system of beliefs, myths and rituals, centred on the sacralization of the state.

In 1925, Don Luigi Sturzo, leader of the Popular Party (*Partito Popolare*), warned that fascist ideology was 'profoundly pagan, and in contrast with Catholicism. We are dealing with state-worship and deification of the nation, because fascism does not permit discussion or limitations: it wants to be *worshipped* for its own sake, it aims at creating a *fascist state*.'⁴

Fascist religion placed itself alongside traditional religion, and tried to syncretize it within its own sphere of values as an ally in the subjection of the masses to the state, although it did stress the primacy of politics. This, perhaps, was the most ambitious objective which the fascists set themselves, and they set about it with fanatical commitment, although they also followed a tortuous series of compromises. Moreover, although it did not have projects as regards de-Christianization, in order to succeed in this experiment fascism did not hesitate to enter into conflict with the Church, even before the 1929 conciliation, and then in 1931 and 1938. The reason behind the conflict was always the same: the fascist state wanted a monopoly over education, in accordance with the values of its own state-worshipping and bellicose ethic, and did not accept any reticence or reduction in citizens' total obedience towards the state and the nation.

With its method of mobilizing and integrating the masses through the use of myths, rituals and symbols, fascism possessed some aspects of a lay religion, which corresponded to the essential characteristics of a 'political religion' which have been noted and recognized in other modern, political movements.⁵ Furthermore, due to its totalitarian nature, and its conception that politics constituted an all-consuming existence, fascism aimed at abolishing the boundaries between the

religious and political spheres. As Giuseppe Bottai stated in 1923, politics was 'life in the most absolute, complete and obsessive meaning of the word', whilst life itself constituted 'a marvellous unity'.⁶ Although not all fascists agreed with these definitions, they were the dominating principles within fascist culture and politics. Yet despite the objections raised by Catholic fascists over the primacy of politics, from its very origins fascism presented itself as a political religion. This image also contributed to its success, as there was an accommodating attitude amongst intellectuals, youth and the patriotic bourgeoisie, who were prepared to welcome and institutionalize a secular religion which was founded on the myth of the nation.

The search for a civil religion had been present in Italian political culture from the *Risorgimento* onwards. As with all romantic nationalism, Italian nationalism constructed its own symbolic world, giving the idea of the nation a sacred aura. The initial elements in the construction of a national religion were derived from the Jacobins, Freemasonry and other secret societies. But the most important component came from Mazzini, with his religious concept of politics as a mission and a duty. His ideal of a Republic was that of a democratic theocracy, founded on a mystical and religious vision of nationhood and liberty.

After Unification, carried through by the monarchy, Mazzini condemned the state because it had not created moral unity amongst Italians, with a common faith in the fatherland's religion. It is from Mazzinian radicalism's opposition to the new Italian state, because unity and independence had not been the act of a people regenerated by their belief in the new national religion, that the origin of the myth of the *Risorgimento* as being an 'incomplete national revolution' can be dated. This myth had widespread influence on the formation of a national anti-liberal radicalism amongst intellectuals, who stressed the need for a national religion; and up until the fascist period there were new generations which contested the liberal monarchy. In reality, the monarchic state had its own symbols and rituals, such as the celebration of the 1848 constitution, the military seizure of Rome, the birth of the Italian Kingdom, and it also had its own martyrs and heroes. But even if there were men amongst the liberals who aspired towards attributing to the state a new lay religiousness, founded on the values of the nation, liberty and progress, the ruling class preferred to entrust the 'nationalization' of the masses to the education system and the experience of military service, rather than

rely on the development of some kind of mass national worship. According to the information we possess today, it does not appear that a 'new politics', aimed at developing a national consciousness amongst the masses, was ever institutionalized during the liberal period.⁷

On the contrary, the search for a civil religion was a common objective for those intellectuals and politicians who proposed the formation of a national consciousness for a modern Italy. In this case, the formulation of a new lay religiousness was considered to be an essential component in cultural modernization. A good example of this was the thinking of Giuseppe Prezzolini and his group of young collaborators, centred around his journal *La Voce*. But they proposed a kind of intellectual, 'aristocratic' religiousness, and did not give any thought to the adoption of myths and symbols for mass consumption.⁸ Conversely, for nationalists the adoption of a national religion for the masses was considered a useful means in combating socialist and Catholic political mobilization, and also of integrating the masses within the state.

This was the aim of Enrico Corradini, founder of the nationalist movement. At the start of the century he proposed to follow the French revolutionary tradition and institute a 'religion of nature and heroes', as in Japan. With their cult of the Emperor and heroes, the Japanese people were in reality carrying out rituals of self-adoration, which integrated individuals within collectivities and consolidated a national consciousness, capable of challenging and defeating the great Russian empire in war.⁹

However, the search for a secular religion was a characteristic not only of nationalism. The aspiration towards creating a 'new faith', which would help form a modern consciousness amongst Italians, or renew the principles of political life, was also present amongst intellectuals who were far removed from nationalism, such as Benedetto Croce.¹⁰ An atheist militant and revolutionary socialist, such as Mussolini, also demonstrated a certain interest in religious phenomena, and defined his conception of revolutionary socialism as being 'religious'. In this period, the future *duce* did not give much importance to rituals, viewing them as a secondary aspect of religion, but he often used metaphors from the Christian tradition to define his concept of a revolutionary party, calling it the *ecclesia* of believers and militants. In fact, for Mussolini socialism was not only a scientific concept, it also had to become a 'faith': 'We want to believe in it, we must believe in it, humanity needs a *creed*.'¹¹

Aspirations towards the foundation of a secular religious faith in politics, in view of the intellectual and moral regeneration of Italians,¹² were very strong amongst the 'generation of 1914'. Carlo Rosselli has written that the young people who fought in the first world war were motivated by a desire to 'sacrifice their body and soul for a cause — whatever it was — provided that it had the capacity to transcend the wretched nature of everyday life.'¹³ The war itself, which was lived as a 'great regenerating experience', contributed to the 'sacralization of politics'. With the myths, rituals and symbols which were born in the trenches, it provided a greater amount of material for the construction of a national religion. The symbolism of death and resurrection, the commitment to the nation, the mysticism of blood and sacrifice, the cult of heroes and martyrs, the 'communion' of camaraderie — all contributed to the spreading of the myth amongst soldiers that politics was a total experience which had to renew all forms of existence. Politics could not return to the banal forms of everyday life, but had to perpetuate the heroic impetuosity of the war and the mystical sense of a national community. During the Great War, and above all during his period of government in Fiume, the major contribution to the creation of a national religion was provided by Gabriele D'Annunzio, through both his writings and activities. The 'soldier poet' invented a large number of religious metaphors, together with rituals and symbols for the cult of the nation, which fascism took with both hands in order to furnish its own symbolic world.¹⁴

The mass destruction, experienced for the first time by millions of men in the trenches, favoured a reawakening of religious feeling. As Marinetti wrote in 1920, '*Today*, humanity needs a new religion which can synthesize and organize all small intimate religions, all superstitions and all secret societies'.¹⁵ In 1922 Sergio Panunzio, a revolutionary syndicalist who became an ideologue of fascism, expressed a similar sentiment: 'There is a desperate need for a religion, and there is undoubtedly a widespread religious feeling . . . but there is no religion.'¹⁶ In these circumstances, many young people and intellectuals saw fascism as an answer to that need, because it appeared to be a movement capable of transcending the banality of everyday life and integrating the individual into a new 'moral community'.

As we have seen, 'fascist religion' put down roots in fertile terrain, where it found sustenance to develop and institutionalize itself as an integral part of the 'new politics' adopted by fascism. However, we do

not believe that this could have taken place in any case, even without the experience of the Great War, because the mythology surrounding wartime experiences was an essential ingredient in the development of 'fascist religion'. Fascism began as a charismatic movement produced by an extraordinary situation, and not as a theory of society and the state.

What united fascists was not a doctrine but an attitude, an *experience of faith*, which was concretized with the myth of a new 'religion of the nation'. As Mussolini proclaimed at the beginning of 1922, fascism was a 'belief which has reached the level of religion'.¹⁷ The initial elements necessary for the formation of a 'fascist religion' were already present in the first phase of the movement, which identified with the myths of war and participation in it. Fascists considered themselves to be the prophets, apostles and soldiers of a new 'patriotic religion', which had arisen in the purifying violence of the war, and which had been consecrated with the blood of the heroes and martyrs who had sacrificed themselves finally to achieve the 'Italian revolution'. 'We are the avant-garde,' as the movement's main organ, *Il Fascio*, stated in 1921:

the depositaries of a generation which for a long time has broken the boundaries of its own historical reality, and is marching unstopably towards the future . . . We are the highest of the high . . . The Holy Communion of war has moulded us all with the same mettle of generous sacrifice.¹⁸

Fascists compared themselves to 'Christian missionaries, lost in unexplored regions, amongst wild and pagan tribes'.¹⁹ The armed reaction against the working class was compared to a soul-saving crusade against the 'triumphal beast' of bolshevism, and was intended to destroy the desecrators of the nation and purify the proletariat of its anti-patriotic myths and influences, as well as restore the cult of the nation.

After the seizure of power, and with the support of many intellectuals, the development of a 'fascist religion' received authoritative cultural support. The contribution of the philosopher Giovanni Gentile and his followers was decisive in this respect. Gentile viewed fascism as a religion because it had 'a religious feeling, in that it takes life seriously', and that 'as a movement it has arisen from the entire soul of the nation'.²⁰ For Gentile, fascism was creating Mazzini's political theology, and it also had a mission to carry out the 'Italian revolution', in order to create an ethical state and 'remould the soul' of the Italian people, after centuries of moral decadence.

Within the regime, the definition of fascism as a political religion became the formal foundation of fascist culture, and was continuously repeated at all levels of the hierarchy, and in all elements of propaganda, throughout its entire existence. In 1926 Salvatore Gatto, a journalist who became a fascist leader and Deputy Secretary of the National Fascist Party (PNF), stated that fascism, like Christianity, was a religion because it provided a belief which transcended attachment to life:

Fascism is a civil and political religion because it has its own concept of the state and its own method of understanding life . . . throughout history the heroes of the fascist revolution, and Christian martyrs, have confirmed a burning reality: that only religion can deny and annul attachment to an earthly existence.²¹

For an eminent figure of the regime such as Giuseppe Bottai, fascism was 'something more than a doctrine. It is a civil and political religion . . . it is the religion of Italy.'²² In 1932, the organ of fascist youth proclaimed that 'a good fascist is religious. We are for a fascist mysticism because it has its own martyrs and devotees, and because it positions an entire people around an idea, rendering them humble.'²³ In 1932, Mussolini stated definitively: 'Fascism is a religious concept of life'.²⁴ In 1938, the party also published a kind of catechism of the 'fascist religion' which, in the form of questions and answers, tried to provide fascists with a 'simple guide, which is as important for the cultivation of the soul as for normal activities in everyday life'.²⁵ Fascist ideology was easily crystallized into the commandments of a 'credo', and furthermore this allowed the movement to avoid running the risks of doctrinal conflicts. As Giampoli, the party leader in Milan, stated in 1929, on the subject of the ideal of fascism, 'it is, as in the Christian ideal, a dogma in a perpetual state of change'.²⁶ This syncretism of different beliefs within fascist ideology permitted the existence of diverse approaches, but none of these could hope to present itself as the only authentic interpretation of the 'faith'. The only true interpretation was the practice of faith through obedience to the *duce* and the party, which ought to be felt and experienced as religious devotion.

Fascism's presentation of itself as a religion did not only regard ideology; it also had a useful function in terms of the movement's institutionalization and in the fulfilment of its totalitarian ambitions. In fact, the presentation of itself as the 'religion of the nation' was the main area within which fascism created its sense of identity — transforming itself from its original spontaneous form into a new type

of party, with the characteristics of a 'militia of the nation', which remained unaltered until its demise.²⁷ Furthermore, fascism's image of being the 'religion of the nation' allowed the movement to monopolize patriotism, presenting itself to the middle classes and the bourgeoisie as the saviour of Italy from the 'triumphal beast' of bolshevism.

After the seizure of power, Mussolini and the party made good use of the image of fascism as being a 'national religion', in order to legitimize their monopoly of power and destroy all political adversaries as 'enemies of the nation'. It was also useful in repressing dissent within the party; rebels were expelled as 'betrayers of the faith', whilst absolute obedience was imposed on other members. Membership of the PNF did not simply involve agreement with a political programme: it was necessary to declare total commitment, until death if need be. Swearing-in ceremonies for new members had been adopted by fascism in 1921, and in many senses this was a continuation of a Mazzinian tradition. It was a ritual during which fascists swore to devote their lives 'to the Nation and to the Revolution', to observe the commandments of fascist morality and to obey orders without question. Whoever broke their oath was a traitor and was expelled from the 'fascist community'. In 1926, the PNF's new statute decreed that a fascist expelled as a 'traitor of the cause' had to be 'banned from political life'. In 1929, a new statute increased the punishment, making it the equivalent of excommunication in the Catholic Church, as it was decided that whoever was expelled from the party would be 'banned from public life'.²⁸

Mussolini's charismatic power was notably increased by the institutionalization of fascism as a religion. For Mussolini himself, the myth surrounding *il duce* constituted an increase in importance for the ritualistic dimension of the regime's policy towards the masses. His meetings with the masses were the highest points of fascist worship in which, with appropriate orchestration, one witnessed the emotional fusion of the leader with the crowds as a symbolic mystical dramatization of the nation's unity, achieved through its supreme actor. One can read in the introduction to a collection of Mussolini's speeches, written in 1923, that 'fascism appears to be a religious phenomenon', and that mass meetings called to listen to his speeches were 'an act both of faith and of wise governmental decision-making'.²⁹

Il duce, placed at the apex of the fascist hierarchy, and surrounded by an aura of holiness, was respected and loved as a kind of demigod.

In 1928 Paolo Orano wrote that ‘Mussolinism is a religion’, because faith in *il duce* was ‘the preparatory phase in Italian religiousness’, in which patriotism had to be ‘intensified to the point of mysticism; and holiness, martyrdom and belief must be considered as powerful forces in the building of civic consciousness’.³⁰ In the regime’s propaganda literature and iconography, *il duce* was presented as a reincarnation of the myth of the hero, which is ‘the projection of all myths of divinity’.³¹

A school of fascist mysticism was even created in Milan in 1930. It was attended by university students who devoted themselves to the religious cult of Mussolini as a living myth. The ‘mystics’ identified fascism with Mussolini, and identified him as the principal source of their faith and main reason for their existence.³² The myth of Mussolini and the ‘cult of the leader’ were undoubtedly the most spectacular and popular expression of ‘fascist religion’. But despite the centrality of the myth of Mussolini, it should not be misunderstood and viewed as the origin of fascist religion. The birth of the ‘cult of the leader’, apart from its more general demagogic aspects, had taken place within the confines of the ‘fascist religion’, and as such was a consequence of it. The charismatic figure of the leader is linked to the entire structure of fascism’s symbolic world, and cannot be treated as a separate element, just as the figure of the Pope cannot be extrapolated from the Catholic Church.

National Secretaries of the PNF played an important role in the institutionalization of the ‘fascist religion’, and in the growth of the cult of the leader. Roberto Farinacci, secretary in 1925–6, employed fascism’s ‘Dominican faith’ to justify the party’s all-embracing policy, which had helped to establish the regime. During this period, fascist morality was definitively set down: ‘The will to work and to be powerful, a self-sacrificing spirit, mystical love of the fatherland, blind obedience to one person’.³³

The definition of the fundamental contours of ‘fascist religion’ was the work of Augusto Turati, secretary in the period between 1926 and 1930. In his speeches to mass rallies, but above all to fascist youth, the ‘new apostle of the fatherland’s religion’³⁴ preached of

the need to believe absolutely; to believe in fascism, in the *Duce*, in the Revolution, just as one believes in God . . . we accept the Revolution with pride, just as we accept these principles — even if we realize they are mistaken, and we accept them without discussion.³⁵

In 1929, Turati published a catechism of ‘fascist doctrine’ in order to set out the orthodox interpretation as opposed to any ‘errors of

concept and expression' which existed, and reaffirmed that the doctrine was based 'on the subordination of all to the will of the Leader'.³⁶

His successor, Giovanni Giurati, party secretary from 1930 to 1931, intensified fascism's sense of blind faith and dogma. He particularly developed youth organization, creating missionaries and soldiers of fascist religion in line with Mussolini's commandment to 'believe, obey, fight'; a motto he coined for fascist youth in 1930.³⁷ According to Carlo Scorza, then commandant of fascist youth and later to become the last PNF Secretary in 1943, the party had to develop into more and more of an 'armed religious order', along the lines of the *Society of Jesus*.³⁸

The formalization of the 'fascist religion', through an almost mechanical multiplication of rituals and symbols, reached its highest point during the long reign of Achille Starace (1931–9). However, it often became ridiculous, with its exasperated quest for a conformism of activity, which was intended to be the expression of a conformism of thought.

In reality, the entire process of the institutionalization of the 'fascist religion' led inevitably towards this kind of outcome. In a certain sense, it is correct to state that, for fascism, the essence, foundation and aim of political activity could be summed up by the key word in fascist language — 'faith'. The prototype of the 'fascist man', in terms of an activist and believer in a religion, had been defined before the 'March on Rome' in one of the militia's regulations: 'The fascist militiaman must serve Italy purely, with a spirit imbued by a profound mysticism, backed up by an unshakeable faith', and he should 'accept his sacrifice as being the aim of his faith'.³⁹

The new PNF statute of 1926 carried a preamble entitled *Faith*, in which it was solemnly outlined that fascism was 'a faith which has had its confessors'.⁴⁰ Throughout the regime's existence, according to an authoritative ideologue, it was agreed as a general rule that 'faith' would take precedence over 'competence', because 'faith has an all-embracing value'.⁴¹ In the official document of fascist doctrine, which was used in the PNF's courses of political education for new leaders, it was stated that 'only faith can create a new reality'.⁴² In essence, fascism considered 'faith' the highest virtue in political activity, viewing it as the chief quality of 'fascist man', apart from intellectual ability. Culture and intelligence counted for less than commitment to the dogmas of fascist religion.

The identification of the fascist militia-man with a religious believer is not mere banality. In fact, the fascists often compared their party to a church, or a military–religious order. Furthermore, fascism did not hide the fact that its totalitarian policies were intended to create, within the political sphere, a kind of organization similar to the Catholic Church. As *Critica Fascista* wrote, the organization of the fascist state

in some way mirrors some of the more important characteristics of Roman Catholic organization: a power which combines and unifies the activities of its members, which transmits its character to them, which transforms its own aims into the highest aims of their own lives in society, and which does not tolerate attempts at *schisms* or *civil heresies*.⁴³

The party was the school in which the apostles and soldiers of the ‘fascist religion’ and the new leaders of the totalitarian state were taught.

The similarity between fascist political activity and Catholic activity can also be noted in some of the party’s rituals. For example, the ritual of *leva fascista*, instituted in 1927, was taken from Catholic liturgy. It was a real ‘initiation ceremony’, similar to confirmation in the Church, in which young people who had been members of youth organizations became ‘consecrated fascists’ and joined the party; the PNF Secretary, who awarded the ‘supreme fascist recognition’,⁴⁴ was ‘a priest who speaks in a mystical voice, which has an enlivening appeal’.⁴⁵ This ritual was carried out with public ceremonies in all Italian cities, but the most important was held in Rome, in the presence of the *duce*. The youths were symbolically presented with the party card and a rifle, and as Mussolini proclaimed at the first ‘conscription’ ceremony: ‘The card is a symbol of our faith; the rifle is the instrument of our strength’.⁴⁶ These neo-fascists swore to ‘carry out the *Duce*’s orders without discussion’ and to serve the cause of the fascist revolution with all their strength, and if necessary, ‘with their blood’. As the PNF Secretary told those assembled: ‘Tomorrow I will have life or death powers over all of your activities and opinions, whether they are good or bad’.⁴⁷

Apart from the personal beliefs of the high priests of the regime, the institutionalization of the ‘fascist religion’ was also motivated by more pragmatic considerations, as it was a means of affirming and legitimizing the party’s primacy with regard to the regime’s other organizations. According to the PNF’s political education books, only the party, following the *Duce*’s orders, had the task of keeping

'the flame of the revolution' alive, and of acting, within the fascist state, as 'the spiritual sustenance, the flame lit by the blood of our fallen'.⁴⁸

This function, supported by party ideologues, was also backed up through intense symbolic iconography, which in civil life aimed at creating an image of the party's 'holiness'. For example, PNF local branches were often referred to as the 'churches of our faith', or 'the altars of the Fatherland's religion', where 'we will cultivate the religious memory of our dead' and where 'we will work to purify the soul'.⁴⁹

The intensification of the symbolism surrounding the party, particularly during Starace's period as Secretary, was accompanied by the party's covert strategy of increasing its power within the state. In 1932 Starace wanted to make the party's presence as the spiritual heart of the regime more loudly heard, so to speak, and he ruled that all party branches should have a 'fascist tower' with bells, which should be rung during every party ceremony. The fascist youth organization explained that with the ringing of bells, a traditional activity which was 'both mystical and popular at the same time', fascism wanted to evoke a centuries-old religious and civil tradition and thereby render more expressive 'its original and increasingly vibrant religious character; which is the result of a virile, Roman education of the spirit, which can only integrate itself admirably with "divine" religion'.⁵⁰

The intention to extol the party's function through a form of religious symbolism can be verified by another significant example. At the beginning of the 1930s, a public subscription campaign was launched for the building of the PNF's national headquarters in Rome, the *Casa Littoria*. Through the people's financial support, the *Casa Littoria* would have embodied 'the incomparable energy furnished by the nation's soul to the Fascist Revolution'.⁵¹ A lively debate began amongst the major Italian architects of the time, above all over the symbolic function of the party's headquarters, as 'the temple where new fascist youth will be forged'.⁵² Their plans provided for a huge office building, a 'fascist tower' with a 'vestry for party banners'; a 'shrine for the martyrs of the fascist revolution', and a huge open space for the hierarchy's mass rallies and the party's ceremonies. The site chosen for the building was near the *Foro Mussolini* (currently the Italian Foreign Office) because, as an official publication explained, it represented

a significant physical reconciliation between the centre from which the spirit of the fascist idea is spread, and the gymnasium in which the new youth of Italy will steel their bodies, in order to bring greater glory to the Fatherland.⁵³

The symbolic glorification of the party's charismatic function was not merely a facade to cover up the hierarchy's ambition for power. In effect, it was fully justified in terms of the tasks set out for the party by the regime's policy, i.e. 'the defence and strengthening of the Fascist Revolution', and 'the political education of the Italian people'.⁵⁴

A large part of the party's educational role consisted of a widespread and continuous propaganda campaign of 'faith', centred around symbols and rituals, aimed at increasing and consolidating the masses' belief in fascist myths. Once the ideology was transformed into dogma, the masses' political participation had to take the form of collective public worship. Apart from being a response to their pragmatic aim of manipulating the masses, this was also consistent with the fascists' intuitive approach towards politics and the masses.

Fascism explicitly rejected rationalism, and praised mythical thinking both as a mental attitude and as a form of political behaviour. Its policy was based on the conviction that both the individual and the masses were motivated by irrational and mythical thoughts. As a book on the fascist concept of the state noted, 'The masses cannot recognise subtle distinctions; they need spiritualism, piety, religious principles and rituals'.⁵⁵ But fascism also recognized that the masses' support was one of the major forces in modern politics, and that their involvement was also necessary in creating the bases for a new authoritarian political system. Yet the aim of such involvement was exclusively directed at an almost blind conformism, in which the masses would be continuously mobilized to follow the orders of the *duce* and the party.

At this point it is now clear why fascism placed such importance upon religion, and, in particular, why it had such a strong commitment towards creating its own system of beliefs and rituals. The masses' conversion to the myths of 'fascist religion' was considered by fascism to be an indispensable element in the consolidation of its power. Consequently, it was only with the socialization of its own system of beliefs, rituals and symbols that fascism believed it would be able to win active and long-term mass support. This was the manner in which fascism intended to integrate and 'nationalize' the masses within the structures of a new totalitarian state, transforming them into an organized moral community under the command of a hierarchy, inspired by a limitless belief in fascism's myths, which was to be transmitted to them through organizations, symbols and rituals.

One could imagine that the high priests of fascism, when they discussed their collective rituals, were influenced by Gustave Le Bon,

an author who was often read by Mussolini, and who wrote: 'A religious or political belief is based on faith, but it could never last without rituals and symbols.'⁵⁶ In fact, from the very origins of the movement, public worship was an essential component in fascism's policy towards the masses. Even if there were no pageant-master, such as Jacques-Louis David in the French Revolution, in the fascist revolution, fascists themselves were conscious of the importance of rituals and symbols in modern mass politics. In 1922, Mussolini's journal *Gerarchia* stated that choreography and ritual were important in encouraging the masses' fervour. It was argued that it was necessary to resume the tradition of the French Revolution: 'During the French Revolution, the encouragement and excitement of the masses were reflected in picturesque secular rituals. Something similar is occurring in fascist ranks today.'⁵⁷ In 1927, Maurizio Maraviglia, a PNF leader, wrote that a revolution could also be identified 'by the strength of its symbols and the beauty of its rituals'.⁵⁸

Throughout the regime's existence, the party displayed an almost obsessive care in the preparation of rituals, which Mussolini also believed to be a crucial element in mass politics. According to Mussolini, every revolution had to create new rituals and symbols in order to give the masses some kind of enthusiasm and order, although old traditions could also be renewed and utilized. Mass politics had to unite mystical and political elements, whilst also possessing a 'joyous element': 'The Roman salute; all the songs, dates and commemorations, are indispensable in preserving a movement's pathos'.⁵⁹

Herbert Schneider defined these rituals as 'the new fascist art of secular celebrations'.⁶⁰ Although the use of rituals was far from being unknown to other political movements, none of them attempted to give public worship such a methodical growth or mass dimension as occurred under fascism, which did so as a result of its culture, which had strong presuppositions of faith and myths. Yet fascism was not concerned with the originality of the materials it used in the construction of its own symbolic world; only with their adaptability in terms of the presentation of myths. They took on the rituals and symbols of other movements without embarrassment and integrated them into their own. The majority of fascist rituals were spontaneously developed during fascism's early period of violence, and were later institutionalized by the regime, as occurred with the swearing-in ceremonies, the consecration and veneration of banners, and above all with the cult of fascism's fallen martyrs.⁶¹

In these early years of *squadrisimo* the movement was extremely skilful at presenting its anti-socialist offensive as a 'war of symbols', through the destruction of red flags and other enemy symbols, and the imposition of public respect for the national flag and the symbols of fascism. For example, the blessing of the *gagliardetto*, which was the banner of the 'squads', was initially adopted as a symbolic ritual of the redemption of a community, brought back within the nation's faith, following the conquest of an area which had been dominated by socialists. The movement's organ wrote in 1921 that with this ritual, the people 'rediscover their awareness, and put themselves back on the road paved by history, and by the destiny of an eternal past'.⁶²

But prior to its seizure of power, all fascist rituals were symbolic displays of the nation's 'new birth', which had been redeemed through the blood of its war heroes and through fascist martyrs, and therefore led back to a spiritual unity which superseded class divisions. As *Il Popolo d'Italia* wrote in 1922: 'Fascist marches are similar to the ritual of *Spring Offerings*; they are the rising up of a will, a song, of spiritual unity'.⁶³ The glorification of a 'sense of community' was a constant theme in fascist rituals, above all at the funerals of colleagues who had been killed; and from the beginning this was the most solemn fascist ceremony of all. The highest point of the ceremony occurred when the names of the dead were read out, to which all those present responded 'here'. In this way, funerals were transformed into 'rituals of life': 'Life always springs from death; the memory of the individual is transmitted forever into the immortal soul of the Nation'.⁶⁴ These rituals were intended to express the strong link between the living and the dead within the fascist community, who were united by the perpetual vitality of faith.

The cult of martyrs also played a central role in fascist worship during the years of the regime. The Deputy Secretary of the party wrote in 1936 that in the Palazzo littorio, where the party's National Secretariat was sited, there was a 'chapel' where 'a flame burns which shall never be extinguished. It was lit by the *Duce*, from a torch given to him by a member of the fascist youth'.⁶⁵ The flame illuminated the chief commandment of the fascist religion: 'believe, obey, fight'.

There was a shrine in every party branch, where the banner was kept, and where the memory of 'the blood of our martyrs' was honoured. A book published in 1941, dedicated to 'fascist martyrs', reaffirmed the charismatic importance of the cult of the fallen: 'Our Fallen, through their sacrifice, have confirmed the holiness of the Blackshirt Revolution, its conquests and its future'.⁶⁶ As with all

religions, fascism tried to give an answer to the problem of death through the exaltation of a sense of community, which integrated the individual into the collectivity. Whoever died believing in fascism became part of its mythical world and thus acquired immortality in view of the movement's collective memory, which was periodically updated in commemorations.

The dialectic between myths, symbols and rituals was the essential structure of the 'fascist religion'. Fascism's adoption of mythical thought was perfectly integrated in terms of its 'religious' concept of politics and the state. Although fascism's symbolic world was full of numerous myths, in a certain sense they were merely corollaries of the dominant myth of the 'new state' as the expression of a 'new civilization'.

From the very start of the movement, fascism's main public ceremonies were organized not only to give an aesthetically evocative image of its power, but also to present symbolically the myth of the new fascist state, in terms of it being a 'moral community' founded on a common faith, which united both diverse classes and generations in the cult of the nation. A typical example of this trend is the following description of a fascist march in 1921, taken from *Il Popolo d'Italia*:

This is the new consciousness; our race's new masculine and warlike pride which, thanks to fascism, has brought back the Roman tradition. Here are the fascist battalions marching past: and here, in perfect marching order, we can see the most beautiful, noble and generous aspects of our people. Intelligent and lively adolescent faces marching beside mature men whose faces betray the strain imposed by the speed of the march; workers and clerks with modest clothes . . . , people who have fought with all kinds of weapons and on all fronts, who fiercely display their medals, and who march with the same pride as when they left the trenches to commemorate the dead and celebrate victories, and to restore their spirit with the memory of their heroes and martyrs, and to prepare themselves for new glories and victories.⁶⁷

The commemoration of the new 'sacred festivals' which the regime instituted, such as the celebration of the 'birth of Rome' or the founding of the fascist movement, were chiefly a representation of fascist mythology, which ran from the evocation of the period of Roman grandeur until the nation's 'new birth', achieved through intervention in the war and the fascist revolution itself.

Apart from the myth surrounding Mussolini, the myth of Rome was perhaps the most pervasive mythological belief in fascism's entire symbolic universe. It was not by chance that the first public holiday instituted by fascism in 1921 was the 'birth of Rome', which was

solemnly celebrated as a fascist day of work, in contrast to the workers' May Day. When the 'birth of Rome' was celebrated for the first time, Mussolini exalted '*romanità*' as a myth which ought to motivate fascism: 'Rome is our guiding star; it is our symbol — or if you prefer, our myth.'⁶⁸ A few years later, Mussolini explained to Emil Ludwig how this myth functioned in terms of fascist politics: 'The entire practice of Latin virtue is here in front of me. It represents a heritage which I try to make use of; and its nature never changes. It is out there, eternal — Rome.'⁶⁹

In fascist religion, Rome represented an archetypal role model. With its remains of classic monuments, Rome became a holy area, predestined by fate, in which the greatness of the 'Latin spirit' had first emerged, thereby giving Roman soil an eternal sacred spirit, an inexhaustible source of energy for whoever came into close contact with it; indeed Mussolini once said that the historic soil of Rome had 'a magical power'.⁷⁰ For fascism, the discovery and restoration of Roman ruins was mainly 'symbolic archeology', inspired by a mythical attraction towards a 'sacred centre' and a desire to come into contact with its 'magical power'. The fascists also treated the 'birth of Rome' ceremony as an initiation ritual, intended to familiarize initiates with '*romanità*'. This ceremony was also inspired by 'a "divine will", by an imperial and powerful will', through which 'the new Italian resumes spiritual contact with ancient Rome'.⁷¹

Once the myth of the 'new Italian' was connected with the myth of Rome, it too took on a religious meaning: it was a symbol of the Italian people's repentance, and of their rebirth as the spiritual heirs of the ancient Romans, rejuvenated by a common belief and, just like their forefathers, willing to defy fate and create a 'new civilization'. In fascist mythology the Roman epoch was the 'time of origins', and was placed at the beginning of the mythical presentation of Italian history, when Italians first created a sacred tradition. In this presentation, fascism's own brief history was already legendary, as it was inserted within a centuries-old history which began with Rome itself, and culminated in the Great War and fascism's rise to power, before being projected into an equally mythical future of grandeur and power.

In order to remind people constantly of this mythology, the regime had an entire calendar of commemorations, in which the great events of fascism's sacred history, such as the birth of Rome and the various stages of the fascist revolution, were displayed in a series of ritual celebrations. For example, the foundation of the fascist movement was publicly celebrated as the start of a new era in Italian and world

history. 28 October, the date of the 'March on Rome', was the day which officially separated one year of the 'fascist era' from another.

The most aesthetically interesting example of 'sacred history' which fascism invented was organized on the tenth anniversary of the 'revolution'. The 'Exhibition of the fascist revolution' was opened in Rome in 1932, and saw the collaboration of the major Italian artists of the period, such as Prampolini and Sironi. The visitor was able to relive the heroic exploits of the Blackshirts through a series of symbolic pictures, which were dominated by the omnipresent image of the *duce*. There was a *Pantheon* of war heroes and fascist martyrs, and an entire hall was dedicated to the living legend, the *duce*. However, the idealistic centre of the exhibition was the 'Martyrs' shrine', a crypt which contained an 'altar of sacrifice', 'a sacred symbol of a race's capacity for self-sacrifice', as the exhibition's catalogue explained.⁷² It was solemnly defined as the 'Temple of the Revolution', where the 'materialization of the myth took place'.⁷³

As with all political religions, fascism wanted to leave traces of its own civilization for posterity through the construction of monuments. Mario Sironi stated that the building of fascist monuments had to express above all 'an appearance and visible sensation of its faith, power, extent and strength'.⁷⁴ Fascism entrusted the materialization of its myth to the architectural world. As an official PNF ideologue outlined, with regard to the choice of the most appropriate architectural style which would represent 'fascist civilization', there should be a preference for '"long-term" architecture, in which stone and the monument's function are emphasized', because 'as regards monumental architecture, i.e. buildings which last for centuries, they are symbols of the state's permanence'.⁷⁵ Monuments, and architecture in general, therefore, had a highly symbolic importance, and through their very presence were intended to contribute, as was the case with public worship, to the permeation of fascist mythology into the consciousness of the Italian people.

The most important architectural example of fascist mythology was the Universal Exhibition, planned to open in Rome in 1942. *EUR 42* was fascism's largest and most ambitious building project, a monument intended to record 'Mussolini's era' for future centuries.⁷⁶ The entire project was conceived as representing the myth of the 'new civilization'. It was intended to become a city, and the project which was mapped out was full of symbolic monuments celebrating the glory of 'Italian civilization'. It was to be 'a theatre of fabulous

architecture, created through evocation . . . an effective expression, in unheard of dimensions, of a magical realism'.⁷⁷ The dominant building was to be the 'Palace of Italian civilization', as the commemoration of the Italian people's greatness would have given the building 'a holy quality: almost making it a *Temple of the race*'.⁷⁸ An imposing 'Altar' was also planned as one of the symbolic monuments of the PNF's Exhibition, dedicated to the 'glorification and celebration of the new order created by fascism'. It would be in the same style as the *Ara pacis* of Emperor Augustus, and its bas-relief would consecrate the victory of fascism and 'the start of a new Era'. From within the altar, which would be positioned below a gigantic illuminated metal arch, a powerful light would project 'an immense shaft of light into the Roman sky'.⁷⁹

Lighting was another important component in *EUR*'s symbolic architecture. It was the radiant symbol of the 'new fascist civilization', the announcement of a new era for humanity. *EUR*'s white architecture, which symbolized the triumph of the Mediterranean sun, was intended to represent fascism's victory over fate in future centuries, designed as it was in the style of the 'new civilization'.

'Fate' was another important part of fascism's symbolic world. Within the context of a 'national religion', it seemed to evoke a kind of obscure divinity, superior to historical events, which periodically tested a people's capacity to leave their mark on history through the creation of a new civilization. For fascism, history was a perpetual struggle between fate and will-power, a struggle which marked out the cyclical rise and fall of civilizations. It was an unpredictable and capricious divinity, but in extraordinary circumstances will-power could overcome fate and become all-powerful. It is possible that Mussolini was convinced that he had the gift of 'foreseeing his own century', and that he was living at a turning-point, when fate provided the possibility of defying history. After being subjected to many centuries of decadence, the Italian people had the chance to create a new civilization; but only total subservience to the *duce*'s leadership, and belief in the fascist religion, would have given Italians the moral force necessary to rise to the challenge. The 'new Italians', the fascists, were destined to be modern Romans, the creators of a new state.

In essence, the construction of a fascist religion, centred around the sacralization of the state, appears to be an attempt to evoke — in order to legitimize the fascist regime — the sacred nature of the Roman archetype as 'an expression of an ethical-religious concept, in

which the essential reasons behind the state's existence and power are projected as symbols of faith'.⁸⁰ In this sense, within the essential contents and ritual and symbolic forms of the fascist religion, one can recognize not only the characteristics of Apter's model of political religion, but more specifically, Liebman's and Don-Yehiya's model of 'statism'.⁸¹

The socialization of the fascist religion, through the sacralization of the state, was aimed at speeding up the processes of 'nationalization' and the masses' integration within the state:

Man reaches the highest moral values of his life within the state, and as such he supersedes all that is individual: personal preferences and interests, even life itself if it is necessary. Within the state we can observe the creation of the highest spiritual values: an eternal continuity, moral grandeur, a mission of public and personal education.⁸²

Fascism's entire symbolic world, in as much as it was an institutional ideology which aimed at socializing its own 'sacred cosmos'⁸³ and inculcating within the masses a 'religious sense of the state',⁸⁴ clearly rivalled traditional religion in claiming its own prerogative over defining the ultimate aim of life. Fascism taught children that 'true paradise is where you follow the will of God, but you can also feel this through the will of the state'.⁸⁵

From their childhood, the idea of the state had to mould men and women 'with the suggestion of a myth, which, in later life, takes the form of civil discipline and an active Army'.⁸⁶ In this fashion, the *duce* hoped to regenerate the character of the Italians, and create a race of 'modern Romans' who would be able to succeed in defying fate:

If I succeed, and if Fascism succeeds, in moulding the character of the Italians in the manner I believe to be appropriate, then rest assured that when the wheel of destiny comes within our reach we will be ready to grasp it and bend it to our will.⁸⁷

One can sum up through this absurd attempt the importance and function which fascism gave to the religious sphere within its political strategy as a whole. Fascist religion, like many other institutional ideologies of this century, failed to achieve its aim. However, the historical importance of its attempt is still relevant, as regards an analysis of the process of the 'sacralization of politics' in modern society. After all, fascism was the first totalitarian nationalist movement of this century which used the power of a modern state in an attempt to bring up millions of men and women in the cult of the nation and the state as being supreme and absolute values.

Notes

1. H.W. Schneider and S.B. Clough, *Making fascists* (Chicago 1929), 73.
2. B. Mussolini, 'La dottrina del fascismo' in *Enciclopedia Italiana*, vol. xiv (Rome 1932).
3. H. Finer, *Mussolini's Italy* (New York, London 1935), 186–7.
4. L. Sturzo, *Pensiero antifascista* (Turin 1925), 7–16. On the myth of the state in fascist ideology, see L. Mangoni, *L'interventismo della cultura* (Rome-Bari 1974); E. Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista* (Rome-Bari 1975); P.G. Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo* (Bologna 1985).
5. See H.-J. Gamm, *Der braune Kult. Das Dritte Reich und seine Ersatzreligion* (Hamburg 1962); E.B. Koenker, *Secular Salvations* (Philadelphia 1964); D.E. Apter, 'Political religion in the new nations', in C. Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States* (London 1963), 57–104; K. Vondung, *Magie und Manipulation* (Göttingen 1971); G.L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses* (New York 1975); C. Lane, *The Rites of Rulers* (Cambridge 1981), 35–44; C.S. Liebman and E. Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel* (Berkeley 1983), 125–7.
6. G. Bottai, *Il fascismo e l'Italia nuova* (Rome 1923), 46.
7. See G.L. Mosse, op. cit., chap. I. On radical nationalism, see E. Gentile, *Il mito dello Stato nuovo* (Rome-Bari 1982), 3–29.
8. See E. Gentile, 'La Voce' e l'età giolittiana (Milan 1972); and also W.L. Adamson, 'Fascism and Culture: Avant-Gardes and Secular Religion in the Italian Case' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24, 3 (July 1989), 411–35.
9. E. Corradini, *Scritti e discorsi 1901–1914* (Turin 1980), 140–1; 'Una nazione', *Il Regno* (19 June 1904); 'Che cos'è una nazione', *ibid.*, 3 July 1904.
10. See B. Croce, *Cultura e vita morale* (Bari 1955), 35.
11. For Mussolini's opinion on rituals see B. Mussolini, 'Giovanni Huss il veridico' (Rome 1913) in *idem, Opera omnia* (Florence 1961), vol. xxxiii, 280. As regards a definition of his 'religious' concept of socialism, cf. his 20 July 1912 letter to Giuseppe Prezzolini, in E. Gentile (ed.), *Mussolini e 'La Voce'* (Florence 1976), 56.
12. R. Wohl, *The Generation of 1914* (Cambridge 1979), 161–201.
13. C. Rosselli, *Socialismo liberale* (Turin 1979), 47.
14. See G.L. Mosse, *Masses and Man* (Detroit 1977), 87–103.
15. F.T. Marinetti, *Taccuini 1915–1921* (Bologna 1987), 488.
16. S. Panunzio, 'La gravità della crisi attuale', *Polemica* (August 1922).
17. B. Mussolini, 'Vincolo di sangue', *Il Popolo d'Italia* (19 January 1922).
18. G. Leonardi, 'Siamo i superatori', *Il Fascio* (2 April 1921).
19. R. Forti and G. Ghedini, *L'avvento del fascismo* (Ferrara 1923), 90.
20. G. Gentile, *Fascismo e cultura* (Milan 1928), 58; *idem, Che cos'è il fascismo* (Florence 1925), 145.
21. S. Gatto, 1925. *Polemiche del pensiero e dell'azione fascista* (Rome 1934), 61.
22. G. Bottai, *Incontri* (Milan 1943), 124.
23. M.P. Bardi, 'Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista', *Gioventù fascista* (10 July 1932).
24. B. Mussolini, *La dottrina del fascismo*, op. cit.
25. PNF, *Il primo libro del fascista* (Rome 1938), 7.
26. M. Giampoli, 1919 (Rome 1928), 346.
27. See E. Gentile, *Storia del partito fascista, 1919–1922. Movimento e milizia*

(Rome-Bari 1989), 461.

28. For the text of the statutes, see M. Missori, *Gerarchie e statuti del PNF* (Rome 1986).

29. A. Caprino, writing in the Introduction to B. Mussolini, *I discorsi agli italiani* (Rome, no date). In addition, see P. Melograni, 'The Cult of the Duce in Mussolini's Italy' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11, 4 (October 1976), 221–37; M. Ostenc, 'La mystique du chef et la jeunesse fasciste de 1919 à 1926' in *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome*, 1, 1978, 275–90; E. Gentile, 'Il mito di Mussolini' in *Mondo operaio*, July–August 1983, 113–28.

30. P. Orano, *Mussolini da vicino* (Rome 1928), 21–4.

31. O. Dinale, *La rivoluzione che vince* (Foligno-Rome 1934), 153.

32. See D. Marchesini, *La scuola dei gerarchi* (Milan 1976).

33. *La Gazzetta di Puglia* (2 April 1925).

34. 'Un appassionato discorso dell'on. Turati', *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 29 October 1926.

35. 'S.E. Turati fra i fascisti bolognesi', *Il Popolo d'Italia* (16 July 1929).

36. *La dottrina fascista* (Rome 1930), 3, 13.

37. See E. Gentile's introduction to G. Giuriati, *La parabola di Mussolini nelle memorie di un gerarca* (Rome-Bari 1981), xxxv.

38. Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Segreteria particolare del Duce, Carteggio riservato, b.31.

39. *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 3 October 1922.

40. In M. Missori, op. cit., 355.

41. G. Gamberini, 'Fede e competenza' in *Critica Fascista*, 1 August 1930.

42. PNF, *La dottrina del fascismo* (Rome 1936), 15.

43. *Critica Fascista*, (15 July 1931).

44. *Foglio d'ordini*, 45 (17 March 1928).

45. 'Adunate del Fascismo', *L'Ordine fascista* (March 1928).

46. *Foglio d'ordini*, 27 (27 March 1927).

47. 'La cerimonia di Brescia', *Il Popolo d'Italia* (22 March 1928).

48. PNF, *Il partito nazionale fascista* (Rome 1936), 53; and *Il cittadino soldato* (Rome 1936), 19.

49. See *Il Popolo d'Italia* (9 and 30 October 1923).

50. C. De Leva, 'La Torre Littoria' in *Gioventù fascista* (30 December 1932).

51. 'Professori e studenti per la Casa del Littorio sulla Via dell'Impero', *Gioventù fascista* (15 March 1934).

52. F. Guerrieri, 'Domus Lictoria' in *Gioventù fascista* (15 November 1935).

53. 'La "Casa Littoria" a Roma' in *Annali dei Lavori Pubblici*, 1937 fasc. 11.

54. The 1938 PNF statute, quoted by M. Missori, op. cit., 402.

55. G. Bortolotto, *Lo Stato e la dottrina corporativa* (Bologna 1930), 35.

56. G. Le Bon, *Aphorismes du Temps présent* (Paris 1919), 96.

57. G. Lumbroso, 'La genesi ed i fini del fascismo' in *Gerarchia* (October 1922). See G.L. Mosse, 'Fascism and the French Revolution', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24, 1 (January 1989), 5–36.

58. *Il Popolo d'Italia* (19 March 1927).

59. E. Ludwig, *Colloqui con Mussolini* (Milan 1932), 122.

60. H. Schneider, *Making the Fascist State* (New York 1928), 222.

61. See E. Gentile, *Storia del partito fascista*, op. cit., 526–34. As regards iconographic examples of fascism's rituals and symbols, see R. De Felice and L. Goglia, *Storia fotografica del fascismo* (Rome-Bari 1981).

62. *Il Fascio* (16 April 1921).
63. F. Meriano, 'Rimini, in un tripudio di sole, commemora Luigi Platania' in *Il Popolo d'Italia* (4 June 1922).
64. *Ibid.*
65. A. Marpicati, *Il Partito fascista* (Milan 1935), 129–30.
66. A. Tailetti, *Martiri dell'Idea fascista* (Turin 1941), 7.
67. 'Superba dimostrazione a Milano', *Il Popolo d'Italia* (4 October 1921).
68. B. Mussolini, 'Passato e avvenire' in *Il Popolo d'Italia* (21 April 1922).
69. E. Ludwig, *op. cit.*, 192–3.
70. *Ibid.*, 106.
71. M. Scaligero, 'Natale di Roma' in *Gioventù fascista* (21 April 1933).
72. PNF, *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* (Rome 1933), 227.
73. O. Dinale, *op. cit.*, 5 and 10.
74. M. Sironi, 'Monumentalità' in *Rivista Illustrata del 'Popolo d'Italia'*, 11, 1934.
75. A. Pagliaro, 'Architettura' in PNF, *Dizionario di Politica* (Rome 1940).
76. See *E42. Utopia e scenario del regime*, 2 vols (Venice 1987).
77. G. Ponti, 'Olimpiade della civiltà. L'E42 Città Favolosa' in *Corriere della Sera* (4 May 1938). Cited in *E42. Utopia e scenario del regime*, *op. cit.*, vii, 62.
78. A plan prepared by Belgiojoso, Ciocca, Peressutti and Rogers, *cit. in E42. Utopia e scenario del regime*, *op. cit.*, 91.
79. This project was planned by Vittorio Cini, and was approved by Mussolini on 4 January 1941, *cit. in E42. Utopia e scenario del regime*, *op. cit.*, 91.
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81. D. Apter, *op. cit.*, 82–7; C.S. Liebman and E. Don-Yehiya, *op. cit.*, 127–8.
82. G. Bottai, 'Stato corporativo e democrazia' in *Lo Stato* (March–April 1930).
83. See T. Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion* (New York 1967).
84. C. Pellizzi, 'Religiosità dello Stato' in *Il Popolo d'Italia* (20 August 1927).
85. *Il libro della Terza classe elementare* (Rome 1936), 65.
86. PNF, *Il cittadino soldato*, *op. cit.*, 13.
87. B. Mussolini, *Opera omnia* (Florence 1957), vol. xxii, 100.

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