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Subject: CASA ITALIANA (Columbia University, New York City)

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information.

INTRODUCTORY:

To understand the extent to which the Italian Government, under the present Fascist regime, has endeavored to spread its propaganda, the Casa Italiana which was founded at Columbia University, is an excellent example. Primarily instituted for the purpose of giving aid and background to university students desirous of studying Italian culture and civilization, it, however, became a center of Italian Fascist propaganda. Similar Casa Italiani have been established under the auspices of the Italian Government at various other institutions of higher learning in the United States. It will be noted that in each instance, where similar foundations have been established, the local Italian Consuls and Consuls General, played a prominent part in the initial effort, insuring the establishment of these Italian cultural centers.

The Casa Italiana was inaugurated on November 12, 1927. The ground had been provided by Columbia University. The cost of the building was \$315,000 of which \$110,000 were subscribed by Italian-American and American sympathizers and the rest given by two wealthy contractors of Italian birth, Mr. Joseph Paterno and Mr. Anthony Campagna. The library was donated by another wealthy Italian-born contractor, Mr. Charles Paterno.

Mussolini was pleased with this initiative, he donated to the Casa Italiana a part of its furniture, sent Guglielmo Marconi, president of the Accademia d'Italia and a member of the Gran Consiglio

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del Fascismo, to inaugurate the institution, and flooded with decorations all those who had had a hand in setting it up.

The charter of the Casa Italiana provided that it was to be governed by a board appointed by and responsible to the President of Columbia University. At the end of 1928, the President of Columbia University appointed as director Mr. Henry Burchell, secretary of the Italy-America Society, a center of Fascist propaganda. During the winter of 1927, Mr. Burchell had made a lecture tour for purposes of Fascist propaganda from New York to St. Louis, Memphis, New Orleans, Santa Barbara, San Francisco, Seattle, Salt Lake City, Lincoln, Omaha, and Chicago. The Italian consuls had cooperated with the Italy-America Society in the organization of this tour. Mr. Burchell had spoken on "The Rebirth of Imperial Rome" and "Mussolini and the Fascist State" (Bulletin of the Italy-America Society, March, 1927). Mussolini rewarded Mr. Burchell's Fascist enthusiasm by bestowing upon him the title of knight commander of the Order of the Crown of Italy (idem, July-August, 1927).

The President of Columbia University not only appointed this unbiased scholar as Director of the Casa Italiana but he also invited the Italy-America Society to make its headquarters at the Casa. In giving this happy bit of news, the Bulletin of the Italy-America Society of December 1928 announced that "The Society will therefore work in cooperation with the Casa Italiana."

Of course the Casa Italiana was working also in cooperation with the Department of Italian of Columbia. The teaching of Italian at Columbia was entrusted to professors Bigongiari, Marraro and Riccio.

Professor Bigongiari was described by the Nation of January 39, 1935 as "openly a member of the Fascist Party" and he neither then nor at any other time denied this allegation. In the Commonwealth of February 13, 1929 he gave vent to his abundant faith in Mussolini in a review of Mussolini's Autobiography:

Mussolini's triumphant proclamation arouses
its but exprec-

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demands of history . . . Even the most superficial reader cannot help feeling the passionate sincerity of this self-interpretation . . ."

A few years later Mussolini himself told us that this "authentic account" was only a fraud concocted, with his consent, by his brother Arnaldo and the former United States Ambassador Childs (Mussolini, Vita di Arnaldo, Rome, 1933, p. 124-5). The Duce's brother was responsible for its lies and the ambassador for its stupidities.

It is not possible to state positively whether Professors Marraro and Riccio have ever been enrolled members of the Fascist party as is Professor Bigongiari. No one however deserves this honor more than they.

Fascist propaganda is indebted to Professor Marraro for a booklet entitled "Nationalism in Italian Education" (Italian Digest and News Service, New York, 1927); a Handbook for American Students in Italy published in cooperation with the Italian Historical Society (Institute of International Education, New York, 1933); and a book, The New Education in Italy, under the auspices of the Italian Historical Society (S. F. Vanni, New York, 1936).

The Italian Digest and News Service was founded in 1927 as "a center of information and propaganda for Italy and the Fascist regime among Americans." The ultra-Fascist magazine, Il Carroccio (January 1927, p. 167) announced its foundation in these informative terms:

"It proposes to publish books and pamphlets documenting fully the new political and economic order in Italy. These monographs will be such as to enlighten the American spirit and they will be printed in editions of tens of thousands of copies."

The director of this institution was Dr. Previtoli, vice-president of the Fascist League of North America. A few months later the Italian Digest and News Service took the name of Italian Historical Society and Dr. Previtoli announced that under this new guise it "would continue in its purpose of enlightening public opinion about the contemporary political, industrial and intellectual revolution in Italy" (Il Carroccio, April 1927, p. 488).

The fact that Professor Marraro issued his books with the cooperation or under the auspices of such a Fascist-controlled

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organization allows us to imagine their spirit without even opening them. Mr. Marraro glorifies the reforms introduced by the Fascist Minister Gentile into the Italian educational system from 1923 to 1925. He makes a point of ignoring the progress made in Italian education in the fifty years before the Fascists came into power. If one is not acquainted with Italian history one is led to believe that the institutions described by Mr. Marraro sprang up like mushrooms through the work of one single man, the Fascist Minister Gentile. In the *New Education in Italy* of 1936, only 10 out of 303 pages are given to explaining or rather to concealing the criticisms which were levelled against the Gentile reforms in Italy within the ranks of the Fascist themselves. The reader is not told that many of the institutions devised by Gentile were scrapped by his successors and that only a pile of ruins was left of Gentile's scheme, wrongly planned and spasmodically carried out. In discussing the discipline to which Italian university professors are subjected, Professor Marraro ignores the fact that in 1931 all professors were forced to sign an oath to the effect that they would carry on the function of teaching and fulfill all their academic duties with the purpose of forming active and valiant citizens devoted to the country and to the Fascist regime." What Mr. Marraro said at the Y.M.C.A. of Brooklyn in a lecture on "Fascist Ideals and Italian Culture" (*Il Carroccio*, 1928 1, p. 240) we do not know. We do know, however, that an article contributed by him to *Current History* of May 1935 under the title "The Fascist Record in Italy" is an outstanding piece of fraudulent infamy. On December 11, 1935, in a ceremony at the Casa Italiana, the Italian Consul General conferred upon Professor Marraro the order of the Crown of Italy "in recognition of his meritorious service in behalf of Italian culture in America" (*Italy-America Monthly*, January 15, 1934, p. 23).

Professor Riccio left for Italy in April 1927 "to submit designs for furnishing the Casa Italiana to Premier Mussolini" (*The New York Times*, April 22, 1927). "During his stay in Italy and through the initiative of Giuseppe Prezzolini several interesting things were accomplished." On July 14 Mussolini received Prezzolini and Riccio and "promised as proof of his willingness to cooperate to have sent from Italy periodicals, furniture and art objects to help furnish and embellish the Casa" (*Bulletin of the Italy-America Society*, January 1929, p. 263-4).

American scholarship owes to Professor Riccio not only some furniture at the Casa Italiana but also a book, *On the Threshold of Fascism* (Casa Italiana, Columbia University, New York, 1929), from which we learn that Prezzolini invented Fascism before

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Mussolini! To prove this contention Mr. Riccio displays an amazing ignorance of the History of all Italian cultural and political movements during the first two decades of the present century and an absolute inability to analyze thoughts or to detect actual, and not imaginary, similarities and contradictions. In this book, published in 1929 at the expense of the Casa Italiana, Mr. Riccio played the part of John the Baptist to Mr. Prezzolini. He paved the way for Mr. Prezzolini's appointment as a professor at Columbia and Director of the Casa. Mr. Riccio's most recent literary exploit is the page contributed by him to the Primo Libro d'Oro della Lingua Italiana published in 1940 by the "Committee pro Italian Language," an appendage of the Italian Consulate in New York. This page bears the title "Italy in the Eyes of Great Foreigners" and consists of bare quotations from Dickens, Goethe, Browning, Byron and Shelley. At the end of this labor, Mr. Riccio modestly has added his own name with no quotation at all. Had a college freshman handed in a paper gotten up in this way, his professor would have marked it: Dickens - A. Byron - A. Goethe - A. Shelley - A. Riccio - F.

In 1934, the Fascist government gave Mr. Riccio a gold medal for his work on behalf of Italian "culture." (Il Carroccio, 1934, p. 213.)

In April 1930 Mr. Burchell retired from the direction of the Casa Italiana and the President of Columbia University appointed as his successor Mr. Giuseppe Prezzolini (Bulletin of the Italy-America Society, April 1930). At the same time, Mr. Prezzolini was appointed full professor of Italian at Columbia and Mr. Riccio was made Secretary of the Casa Italiana. We strongly suspect that the announcement of Mr. Prezzolini's appointment given by The New York Times of April 26, 1930, is due to the pen of Mr. Riccio who alone could write such nonsense as that contained in the statement that Prezzolini had been a "leader in Futurism, Fascism and Modernism" and that he would carry out in the Casa Italiana "an international program for the introduction of Italian culture to the Western World."

Before the war of 1914-18, Mr. Prezzolini was a sort of crusader in Italy. During the post-war crisis he acquired the wisdom to place himself au-dessus de la melee and he took no part in the battle between Fascists and anti-Fascists. He was an "open-minded" man, waiting to see which way the wind would blow. When the anti-Fascists were hopelessly worsted, there was no doubt in his mind as to what course to pursue.

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Unfortunately there was a black mark in Mr. Prezzolini's past. In 1915, when he was still a crusader, he had published a study purporting to prove the Slavic character of Dalmatia and maintaining that Italy had neither the right to conquer it nor any interest in so doing. The Italian Nationalists, who occupied many posts of strategic importance within the Fascist Party, never forgave Mr. Prezzolini this act of intellectual integrity and moral courage. Mr. Prezzolini, however, put their hostility to good use outside of Italy. It was thanks to their enmity that in 1925 he secured a well-paid position with the Institute for Intellectual Cooperation in Paris. This job was given to him because it was expected that he would stay free of any pronounced Fascist influence.

But, while he was thus taking advantage of the hostility of the Nationalists, Mr. Prezzolini managed to have his fealty declared to and accepted by Mussolini. In former times the two men had been friends fighting in the same liberal camp and Mussolini was not one to give too much importance to youthful errors since he himself had undergone considerable changes of opinion! It was to his interest to welcome all those who were willing to serve him and so it was not difficult for Mr. Prezzolini's overtures to meet with success.

If we are to believe the account given by Mr. Bruno Roselli in 1934 (*IL MONDO*, February 1941), the understanding between Mussolini and Prezzolini came into being after the latter had become a professor at Columbia and director of the Casa Italiana. This chronological item is certainly erroneous. As early as 1925, Mr. Prezzolini was on good enough terms with Mussolini to introduce to the Dictator persons interested in promoting the Casa Italiana (*Il Carroccio*, 1925, II, p. 605). Again in 1927, as we have seen above, he was instrumental in favoring Mr. Riccio's advances to Mussolini.

In this same year, 1927, Mr. Prezzolini published a *Vita di Niccolo' Machiavelli Fiorentino* (Mondadori, Milan), a romanticized biography abounding in low comedy tricks and contortions repellent to any reader acquainted with the tragically serious subject-matter. It was the life of Machiavelli as written by a clown. Throughout the whole work there are political allusions meant to be gratifying to the Fascists and to Mussolini. Here are a few jewels of this sort:

"We know that to combat for liberty is madness;
we may be indulgent enough to call it generous but

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it is madness all the same . . . We know that slaves, when their master is killed, lose no time in looking for another master. We know that the Tyrant is not a man to be hated; often he is a luckless fellow endowed with great patience, who takes upon himself the sins and the misery of his people in order to lead them where they would never go if they knew their destination. We know that at certain times peoples feel the need of being commanded; they do not wish to think but only to obey; not to discuss, to reflect, to worry, to torment themselves, to doubt; they wish only to accept what another decides for them and at such times a Tyrant is useful, necessary, beneficent and providential (p. 61-32) . . . The hero does not mutter prayers nor is he an ascetic. He is a man of violence . . . ever armed with a club or a sword. The club and the sword serve good ends. Woe be unto those who do not fear the stroke of the sword (p. 166) . . .

And so on for pages of complacent description and admiration of the Fascist bludgeon (p. 174-5), the same manganello that in 1925 had fallen on the head and shoulders of Giovanni Amendola and thus caused the death of a man for whom Mr. Prezzolini had professed great affection. Among the other imaginary activities which Mr. Prezzolini credited to Machiavelli was the Florentine's participation in the March on Rome, alongside of Mussolini. But Mr. Prezzolini does not tell us whether Machiavelli would have mounted a white horse or whether he would have accompanied Mussolini from Milan in his sleeping-car.

Mr. Prezzolini must have been looking in the mirror when he wrote the following page:

"The thinking Italian created at this time (the Counter-Reformation) another revolution which proclaimed his spiritual liberty. He went to mass, he doffed his hat, he gave every outward sign of respect and persuasion without feeling them in his heart. Were hats to be doffed? The Italian complied. Was he to address idiots as 'Your Excellency' and brigands as 'Your Honor'? He made no objection to such a small tribute of words but in his own home he called them idiots and brigands. Forced to a daily

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exercise of dissimulation and pretense, he soon began to excel in political 'dexterity.' Thus his character was marked once and forever. His ability to adapt himself to circumstances carried civilization to a maturity bordering on corruption. But this corruption was endured with lightness and gentleness and, indeed, with a certain sadness." (p. 227.)

This state of moral putrefaction Mr. Prezolini called "revolution" and "civilization," nay, even "spiritual liberty."

In view of these antecedents, the appointment of such an "educator" as a professor at Columbia University and director of the Casa Italiana raised no objections among Italian Fascists, either in Italy or in the United States. The Fascist magazine, *Il Carroccio* (April 1930; p. 242) commented in the following terms: "We cannot but rejoice at the choice made by Columbia."

If Columbia University were in Italy, no one could object if it only admitted Fascist teachers and the Fascist version of events. Fascist doctrine is clear. It was expounded by Mussolini on December 5, 1925:

"The Government demands that the school shall be inspired by the ideals of Fascism. It demands that the school shall not be, I do not say hostile, but even indifferent or skeptical toward Fascism. It demands that all the schools, in every class and in every course, shall educate Italian youth to understand Fascism and to renew itself in Fascism and to live in the historical atmosphere created by the Fascist Revolution."

If Fascist philosophy, "Italian" culture means "Fascist" culture. Whatever is anti-Fascist or even simply non-Fascist is not Italian. Men like Borgese, Croce, Ferrero, Salvemini, Sforza, Silone, Don Sturzo, Toscanini, Venturi are excluded from Italian culture because they are anti-Fascist and therefore anti-Italian, and vice-versa, men like Bigongiari, Marraro, Prezolini and Riccio, in Fascist Italy or in Nazi Germany would be entitled to monopolize such institutions as the Casa Italiana. Mussolini not only favored the beginnings of the Casa Italiana and contributed to its furnishings, but in 1932 made to it an outright gift of \$10,000 (*THE NEW YORK TIMES*, July 18, 1932). If he had suspected that a taint of any culture other than "Fascist" might penetrate the Casa Italiana under the disguise of "Italian" culture, his attitude would have been different. In 1928, Count Sforza was chosen by the Internat-

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ional Institute of Politics of Williamstown, Mass., as speaker at their meetings, after the Fascist Signor Cippico had been chosen in 1925 and before the Fascist agent Signor Villari was chosen in 1932. The CARROCCIO never objected to any Fascist speaker. But it bitterly reproached the Italian Ambassador to Washington for not preventing Count Sforza's appointment. What was the use of keeping an Ambassador in Washington if he was unable to prevent such a scandal? (CARROCCIO, 1928, II, 8). This is Fascist mentality, and there is a perfect consistency in it.

Columbia University and the Casa Italiana, however, are located in New York, not in Rome, and New York is in a supposedly democratic country. Under free institutions, anyone of real ability and good character is entitled to be a teacher, even if he is a Fascist. But no monopoly can be granted to any one political party. We may even admit that, in a free country, there should be allowed Fascist or Communist universities just as there are Roman Catholic universities and of course all the teachers of any such school must share the same faith. But such universities must openly profess their doctrines. Columbia University and the Casa Italiana never termed themselves Fascist. They were expected to be free of political affiliations and open to the free competition of all schools of thought.

In 1924, a Protestant protested against the appearance of the Roman Catholic Papini as a lecturer at Columbia. The President of the University rejected this protest on the grounds of intellectual freedom, stating that persecution of those whose doctrine may not agree with ours was "un-American" (THE NEW YORK TIMES, January 16, 1924). This was right. But, at the Casa Italiana, all the teachers were members of the Fascist Party or Fascist fellow-travelers, and only those speakers were admitted who were prepared to sing the praises of Mussolini, besides those who confined themselves to archaeological, artistic, literary or other sterilized subjects. Speakers in disagreement with the Fascist were methodically banned.

In February of 1928, Mr. Luigi Criscuolo, who had not yet seen the light on the road to Damascus and was not yet an admirer of Mussolini, publicly asked the President of Columbia to allow anti-Fascists to lecture at a course on contemporary Italy announced by the Casa Italiana. The President solemnly answered:

"We are a University in which free and fair discussion of all subjects that come within the proper range of our intellectual interest and activity is encouraged and promoted in the hope that thereby the course of truth will be advanced.

...The University does not permit itself to be used for what

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it has become fashionable to call propoganda of any kind nor would it under any circumstances take part in or foment a partisan discussion of the internal politics of any State or nation." (THE NEW YORK TIMES, February 15, 1928.)

Thus, according to the President of Columbia, "the cause of truth will be advanced" only by Fascists; "free and fair discussion" can take place but among Fascists; Fascist opinion is not partisan; whoever dares to contest the Fascist interpretation of events is partisan and hence cannot advance the "cause of truth" and cannot obtain the right of "free and fair discussion" in the Casa Italiana. In other words, the conceptions of truth held by Mussolini and by the President of Columbia were as like as two peas in a pod.

In 1939, in the first volume of his autobiography ACROSS THE BUSY YEARS (I, 13) Dr. Butler was to express the opinion that Mussolini's "intellectual power is overestimated by both himself and his friends." But before Mussolini attacked Ethiopia in 1935, the President of Columbia was one of his most faithful admirers. In September 1924, Mussolini sent him an autographed photograph with a message expressing high esteem (THE NEW YORK TIMES, September 28, 1924) and in November of the same year this was followed by the bestowal of one of the highest Italian decorations (THE NEW YORK TIMES, November 12, 1924). In February 1925, Dr. Butler stated that "it is safe to predict that just as Cromwell made modern England, so Mussolini will make modern Italy" (CARROCCIO, February, 1925, p. 252). In April 1927, speaking at the University of Virginia, he rightly described the Fascist attack against democracy as more serious by far than Communism. But without the least shadow of a doubt, without the least sign of criticism he dished up all the slogans of Fascist propoganda, and he described Fascism as the "amazing movement which under the leadership of Premier Mussolini has brought new life and vigor and power and ambition to the great people of the Italian peninsula":

"We must accept the demonstration that Fascism is a form of government of the very first order of excellence. There is no contradiction by any responsible authority as to the stupendous improvement which Fascism has brought in the order, the safety, the health, the education, the comfort and the satisfaction of the Italian people.....They were pretty much broken down as a government. The conditions cried aloud for remedy; anarchy, bankruptcy, moral powerlessness, had apparently seized upon that great people.....Six million Italians were one day without water to drink or to cleanse themselves; the railways had broken down, the postal service was wrecked, the roads were in disrepair; brigandage, anarchy and crime

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were rampant everywhere. All that is gone and the country is orderly and ordered and looks itself and the world with pride and satisfaction. All in five short years. I question whether in like time any equally complete revolution in the public habits and the order of the people has ever been accomplished. We cannot quarrel with its action....Whether or not this philosophy makes appeal to other nations one cannot say, but, certainly, it has made a magnificent and powerful appeal to the Italian people--that great people....is back in the very front line of performance and achievement in this twentieth century. That in itself is a great and striking and persuasive phenomenon."

(N. M. Butler, LOOKING FORWARD, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1932, pp. 183-197).

A believer in democracy who had swallowed lock, stock and barrel Dr. Butler's version of Italian history must have been a very pig-headed man if he had not thought that it would be worthwhile to try Fascism in America also since it had brought so much life and vigor to Italy.

Mussolini, however, expected more from Dr. Butler. The latter had admired Fascist achievements but had not accepted Fascist philosophy. On Mussolini's behalf the Italian ambassador to Washington told Dr. Butler that he should go to Rome to discuss philosophy with Mussolini. So, Dr. Butler went to Rome in June 1927.

On alighting at the Rome station he was pleasantly surprised:

"We were greeted on the platform by a representative of the Foreign Office, as well as by several military and civil aides, who straightway took charge of all arrangements for our comfort and welfare. It appeared that we were guests of the government. A charming apartment at the Hotel Excelsior had been assigned to us."

Dr. Butler's and Mussolini's philosophical discussions did not lead anywhere. "It was plain that my views made no impression on Mussolini, and his made none on me." But they parted in friendly fashion. "I must say that Mussolini is the only outstanding political leader or dictator whom I ever met who would permit free and open debate with him on his doctrines and principles and yet keep up friendly relations." Who then could have surmised that there was no freedom of speech or no freedom of the press in Italy? Who could have surmised that a Special Tribunal for the defense of the State consisting of officers of the Fascist Militia, was grinding out hundreds of years of imprisonment for people who did not agree with Mussolini's doctrines and principles? Who could

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have surmised that there were in Italy islands on which people were interned without any trial at all? After disagreeing with Mussolini's philosophy, Dr. Butler received an honorary degree from the University of Rome (THE NEW YORK TIMES, June 26, 1937) and then was bamboozled all over Italy to "see the Fascist organization in practical operation." He thought that he had been enabled "to see the wheels of Fascism go round" since he had visited a certain number of buildings, rooms and officials. (ACROSS THE BUSY YEARS, II, 153-156).

That month of June, 1927 must have left Dr. Butler triumphal memories. He was received not only by Mussolini, but also by the King and the Pope. He showed them what were the aims of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and "Premier Mussolini and the Pope showed the keenest interest and promised their whole-hearted support." (THE NEW YORK TIMES, June 26, 1927).

Under such circumstances one could hardly expect Dr. Butler to disagree with Mussolini on "culture" or "propaganda." Fascism was "culture" and anti-Fascism "propaganda."

"DUCE! DUCE! DUCE!"

It is only fair to admit that, during his first years as director of the Casa, Professor Prezzolini tried personally to remain aloof from militant politics. He wished to be considered an "unbiased scholar." For this reason he gave hospitality at the Casa Italiana to some few persons not in favor with Fascism. In 1930, Dr. Maz Ascoli and Dr. Guido Ferrando were guests at the Casa, without being invited to any official functions or giving any lectures. They were treated as morganatic friends of the director. Since they had only just arrived in this country, they were not aware of the special treatment accorded them. In 1931, Professor Prezzolini went so far as to ask to tea Guglielmo Ferrero whose guest he had once been in France. But this tea was of a morganatic rather than of an official nature. There was no question of Ferrero being considered as a lecturer on the same level as the renowned Dantist and Fascist, Marquis Piero Misciatelli.

While Professor Prezzolini was keeping up a pretence of personal aloofness, the Casa Italiana, under Professor Prezzolini's direction, remained faithful to the definition of "culture" given by the President of Columbia in relation to things Italian.

In March, 1930, the Casa created a "Book of the Month Club" which should recommend the best Italian books. Its committee was, of course, totally Fascist: G.B. Angioletti, Professor Emilio Bodrero, Franco Ciarliantini, Curzio Malaparte, F.T. Marinetti, F. M. Martini, Ugo Ojetti, Alfredo Panzini, Giovanni Papini, Margherita

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Sarfatti and Professor Gioacchino Volpe (THE NEW YORK TIMES, March 28, 1930). We can easily guess how many anti-Fascist books were recommended.

Lectures on contemporary Italy were consistently entrusted to Fascists or pro-Fascists. Dante remained the favorite subject of local and out-of-town visitors. One such dilettante was thus announced by the ITALY AMERICA SOCIETY BULLETIN of October, 1931, p. 155:

"The eminent Italian Scholar and authority on art and literature and renowned Dantist, Marquis Piero Misciatelli, has been invited to Columbia University by President Butler. He will deliver a series of four lectures on Dante's Divine Comedy with comments in English at the Casa Italiana....He is a Fascist."

The Casa Italiana unflinchingly gave receptions for Fascist dignitaries from Italy. In November, 1930, Count Volpi, former Italian Finance Minister, was introduced by the President of the University. (THE NEW YORK TIMES, November 11, 1930). In November, 1931, the Fascist Foreign Minister, Count Grandi, was honored. (THE NEW YORK TIMES, November 25, 1931). In December, 1932, the new Consul General, Grossardi, after a dinner given by the Fascist Italian Historical Association, was officially received at the Casa Italiana (THE NEW YORK TIMES, December 18, 19, 1932). In May, 1933, Robert Underwood Johnson, former ambassador to Italy, presented to the Casa Italiana an American and an Italian flag: "Professor Prezzolini presided and the Royal Italian Consul General in New York, Grossardi, accepted the gifts." (THE NEW YORK TIMES, May 5, 1933.) Thus the responsible representative of the Casa Italiana would seem to be the Italian Consul rather than Director Prezzolini.

The Italy America Society, which had its abode in the Casa Italiana, had as its secretary and the editor of its publication, the ITALY AMERICA MONTHLY, Mr. Beniamino de Ritis. In 1934, this gentleman left America to go to Malta as "inspector of the Italian schools." Malta was a hot-bed of Fascist and anti-British activities and Mr. de Ritis' mission was "most delicate and of extreme political importance." (CARROCCIO, July 1934, p. 227). It is clear that Mr. de Ritis had proved his ability while working in the Italy America Society.

The Dante Alighieri Society, a Fascist transmission belt, also found shelter at the Casa Italiana and "established close cooperation with the Casa." (THE NEW YORK TIMES, August 31, 1930).

In 1932, under the direction of Mr. Leonard Covello, a "Casa Italiana Educational Bureau" was established. Its purpose was "the

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gathering and presenting of social and educational facts for the study and interpretation of the social and cultural changes in Italian immigrants and their descendants in the United States" and "it endeavored to serve as a medium for the centralization of activities directed toward the cultural advancement of the Italo-American" while encouraging "the diffusion of the Italian language in the high schools and colleges of the United States." (ITALY AMERICA MONTHLY, September 25, 1935, p. 11). In the ITALY AMERICA MONTHLY of July 15, 1934, p. 11-17, Mr. Covello published a grandiose plan for an intelligent, authentic, scientific, objective, unbiased and centralized investigation of the Italian American community. This would amount to a real Italian-American encyclopaedia. But nothing has come of it beyond a study on p. 11-21 of the ITALY AMERICA MONTHLY of February, 1935, and nine bulletins issued between 1932 and 1936, a third of which were stuffed with Fascist propaganda under the guise of reviews of recent books.

The Bureau's work developed on quite different lines from scholarship or education.

On November 26, 1933, the representatives of ninety-nine Italian societies, invited by the Educational Bureau, held a meeting at the Casa Italiana to discuss ways and means of promoting the study of Italian. The speakers were Professors Prozzolini, Cosenza, Covello and Consul Grossardi.... "One of the most encouraging features of the meeting was the whole-hearted support offered to the Consul's plan to permit Italian societies to donate part of the proceeds from banquets towards a permanent scholarship fund for needy students in Italian." (ITALY AMERICA MONTHLY, April 15, 1934, p. 21.) On April 27, 1934, an Italian FESTA was held aboard the Italian liner "Rex" with over three thousand participants "representing the combined efforts of over two hundred Italian and Italo-American organizations of New York and vicinity." (ITALY AMERICA MONTHLY, May 15, 1934). From the CARROCCIO, 1934, p. 213, we learn that \$3,000 were collected, of which \$1,000 were for scholarships to young Italian-Americans wishing to study in Italy and another \$1,000 to the Educational Bureau of the Casa Italiana. The next step was the creation of an "Educational Italian Clubs Foundation" which held its first meeting at the Casa Italiana on September 30, 1934, (CARROCCIO, 1934, p. 213). These "Educational Italian Clubs" were no more or less than Fascist Clubs disguised as educational centers. Thus the Bureau gathered around the Italian Consulate more than 250 associations. (ITALY AMERICA MONTHLY, July 15, 1934). In 1933, Mussolini had already begun to prepare for a war with Ethiopia and, when this war broke out, all those associations marched united under the orders of the Consulate. After 1936, the Bureau no longer gave any signs of life. It had performed its task.

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CASA ITALIANA (Cont'd.)

However, by personally sticking to a somewhat reserved attitude, the Director of the Casa Italiana caused some ill humor among the Fascist firebrands of New York. In his letter of November, 1934, published by IL MONDO, February, 1941, the Fascist propaganda agent, Professor Bruno Roselli, gave a hint of such complaints by saying that Prezzolini "became and remained for along time a mighty silent man while the Italians of Italy and of America sharpened their claws in expectation."

By September, 1933, Professor Prezzolini's comparative discretion faded away. Perhaps during his summer vacation in Italy, he was told to show more enthusiasm in order to disprove a suspicion of Fascist efficiency; otherwise someone more active, such as Professor Roselli, might have walked away with the directorship of the Casa Italiana. The fact is that in September, 1933, the Fascist magazine, ATLANTICA, published an article by Professor Prezzolini under the title "Impressions of a Traveler in Italy." A better title would have been "Prezzolini in Wonderland." When the author bought his ticket for Italy in Paris, his heart beat faster because the Italian Tourist Agency was "the most beautiful tourist agency" in that city. Entering Italy he found that, whereas in France, the sun had been "watery" and in Switzerland "clouded over," now the weather was superb, thanks, undoubtedly to Mussolini. At Milan, the traveller discovered that "Italy seems a land of luxury, of abundance, of quiet security....In New York drawn faces but in Milan happy faces....A burst of youth, an abundance of people, a beauty natural to the race both in the men and in the women." All this, too, thanks to Mussolini. At Bologna he admired not only the new buildings of the University, the most handsome University president that I have ever seen." And what about the President of Columbia? Indeed, ingratitude is the privilege of an independent heart!...

"I talked to a railroad employee who had heard that I came from America. He couldn't believe that things were going so badly in America: beggars on the streets, public distribution of bread and milk every evening to millions of the unemployed, salaries unpaid for three years, primary schools closed in states as large as all of northern Italy. In contrast to all this he told me about the efficiency of the Italian Relief Organization and the spirit of mutual helpfulness among all citizens."

And so from marvel to marvel, from ecstasy to ecstasy, until a cry of love arose from the traveler's heart:

"All this spirit of youth, this fervor, this vitality, this renewal, this acceleration of tempo are due to a moving force, far away but everywhere present....to a single central moving

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force that tirelessly pushes onward. I feel the rhythm of this force just as on a great steamer I feel the vibration of the engine even when standing at the bow. The name of this moving force is told to me by the crowd of young and old that I came upon by chance before the Palazzo Venezia shouting ceaselessly in unison: 'Du-ce, Du-ce, Du-ce!'"

Thus it can be seen that although the primary purpose in establishing the CASA ITALIANA (Italian House) was founded in an endeavor to promote Italian culture and a better understanding of Italian history, civilization and Italian contributions to law, art, music, science and religion, the institution became a center of propaganda for the Italian Fascist cause.

Since this organization was previously used by the Italian Government, a partner of the Axis in the present conflict, as an effective means for the dissemination of Fascist propaganda, and since this deep-rooted relationship must necessarily still exist, the CASA ITALIANA should therefore be regarded with suspicion and its activities must be kept under constant surveillance.

In preparing this information for the field, it must be borne in mind that it is being distributed solely for the purpose of graphically illustrating one of the many channels through which Fascist propaganda flows with the encouragement of the Italian Government.

To: ALL ND's, FBI, MID, COI and State Dept.
November 22, 1941.

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