work of socioeconomic organizations, decentralizing decision making and strengthening social discipline, without all the excesses of revolutionary syndicalism. But the syndicalists had to be clearer about what they were trying to do if they were to offer a more realistic blueprint for solving the problems that had bothered them all along.

The failures in practice which the syndicalists encountered after 1904 revealed the inadequacies of their doctrine—both the revolutionary syndicalist emphasis on vigorous class struggle, and the Marxist interpretation of Italy's problems. Frustration and defeat soon forced the syndicalists to confront more explicitly the problems that had made them alienated radicals in the first place. By the time they became fascists, they understood both their underlying objective and the obstacles to its fulfillment more clearly than they had during the orthodox period of revolutionary syndicalism in Italy. But the syndicalists never abandoned their quest for the kind of society which found utopian expression in their vision of a syndicalist future—a disciplined, closely knit society of producers governing itself through economically based organizations, with no need for old-fashioned politics. This was the goal they proposed for fascism.

4 / *The Corruption of the Proletariat*

In introducing the Italian translation of Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* in 1907, Benedetto Croce gave Sorel credit for identifying the central uncertainty of modern socialism—the question of how the proletariat was to develop the capacity to institute a superior order.[1] According to socialist theory, the proletariat was to play the kind of historical role the bourgeoisie had played when it led European civilization beyond feudalism, demonstrating great courage, ability, and idealism in the process. But it was questionable whether the proletariat was developing comparable attributes. Croce reminded his readers that the socialist labor movement could be of transcendent historical interest only if it was preparing to create something new, not if it was merely a force for material improvement within the existing order. By 1911, Croce felt that further experience had closed the matter; he pronounced socialism dead in a widely discussed interview in *La voce*.[2] Socialism could have emerged only according to the syndicalist blueprint, from within the labor movement, but the labor organizations were concerned solely with immediate material advantage. If the proletariat was not interested in socialism, hopes for a socialist society had no basis. Croce noted that the Italian syndicalist intellectuals were turning away from the usual socialist concerns and were developing instead a critique of the modern parliamentary state.

Croce and Sorel had known each other since 1895, when Croce agreed to collaborate on Sorel's new review, *Devenir social*; they began a long correspondence that same year. In a letter just after the *La voce* interview was published, Sorel endorsed Croce's observations on the death of socialism, and indeed he was coming to the same conclusion himself.[3] Writing to Mario Missiroli the previous November, he lamented that "syndicalism is falling apart" and claimed to be "happy no longer to have any connection with the revolutionary movement."[4] In letters to Croce early in 1911, Sorel complained that the existing

system had succeeded in absorbing the workers, and especially their leaders, by offering political and economic advantages.[5] As a result, the socialist labor movement was no longer of interest to philosophers, and Sorel resolved to write nothing further on the subject.

A series of defeats had by now forced the Italian syndicalists into a similar disillusionment, dissolving the bright hopes of 1904. During 1905 there was considerable dispute in the Italian labor movement about the validity of the syndicalist strategy, with its emphasis on militant strikes. Dissension between syndicalists, whose strength lay primarily in the locally based chambers of labor, and reformists, who were stronger in the more modern trade federations, linking workers of a particular industry, soon undermined the effectiveness of the major coordinating body in the Italian labor movement, the Central Resistance Secretariat. In April 1905, the secretariat's refusal to declare a general strike of solidarity contributed to the disastrous failure of a railroad strike which the syndicalists supported. Despite syndicalist protests that this strike, with its poor showing of worker solidarity, was not a fair test, the reformists were able to convert many organizers and workers in the aftermath by insisting that the strike's outcome proved the folly of syndicalist methods.[6]

During 1905 and 1906, the reformists defeated the syndicalists again and again in the Italian labor organizations. The syndicalists even lost control of the Milan Chamber of Labor, their major foothold in the vitally important Milanese labor movement, early in 1906. By October of 1906, when the General Confederation of Labor (CGL) was founded, the syndicalists were clearly a declining minority in Italian labor; the reformists dominated the new confederation from the beginning. Despite its formal independence, the CGL soon implicitly recognized the political suzerainty of the Socialist party and concerned itself primarily with the immediate economic well-being of its members, not with overall socialist strategy.[7] Syndicalist ideas remained influential only in a few scattered organizations, especially in the chambers of labor of Parma, Ferrara, and Piacenza, in one of the railroad unions (the Sindacato Ferrovieri), and in the Merchant Seamen's Union.

At the same time, the syndicalists were faring no better on the political level. Their tactical alliance with Enrico Ferri quickly broke down as the syndicalist doctrine became more coherent and as the party suffered electoral defeat in the wake of the general strike of September 1904. The opportunistic Ferri began moving toward the center, dissociating himself from the increasingly unpopular syndicalists and finding political allies in other sectors of the party. By October 1906, when the party held its national congress at Rome, Ferri had put together an ambiguous but still nonreformist majority which

excluded the syndicalists altogether. By now syndicalism was growing isolated, numbering only about 5,000 of the 34,000 members of the party.[8]

Shaken by these defeats, the syndicalists sought to regroup and to reexamine their strategy at a congress of their own, including both organizers and intellectuals, held at Ferrara in June 1907. Over the objections of Enrico Leone, they decided to abandon the Socialist party altogether and formed a Federation of Autonomous Syndicalist Groups to coordinate syndicalist activities. The party returned the favor at its national congress of 1908: the reformists regained the majority, and revolutionary syndicalism, deemed irresponsible and insurrectionary, was officially declared heretical.[9] It was harder for the syndicalists to contemplate formal schism on the trade union level, however, so the syndicalist congress of 1907 decided not to form a new confederation of revolutionary syndicalist labor organizations to compete with the CGL. The struggle against the reformists, most felt, could best be waged from within the existing confederation, so the syndicalist organizations were to remain or become CGL members. In fact, however, revolutionary syndicalism made virtually no headway within the CGL. Determined to maintain their hegemony, the reformist leaders of the confederation refused to admit solidly syndicalist organizations like the Parma Chamber of Labor.[10] They did admit syndicalist organizations with strong reformist minorities, hoping that CGL affiliation would help the reformists to overturn the syndicalist leadership. These syndicalist organizations had little effect on CGL policy, although most managed to retain their syndicalist orientation. Given these frustrations, the question of unity or schism remained a source of uncertainty and division for the syndicalists until a rival confederation was finally formed in 1912.

A series of major syndicalist strikes took place during 1907 and 1908, but the outcome only furthered the disillusionment in Italian syndicalism. The most publicized was the strike at Parma, involving mostly agrarian workers, which Alceste De Ambris and the local chamber of labor led during May and June of 1908. The syndicalists had led a more limited strike to success in Parma in May 1907, and both employers and workers had spent months preparing for the renewal that came a year later. The strike began, in fact, when the landowners' association imposed a lockout on the organized agricultural day laborers. The ensuing strike was especially "syndicalist" in tone, because it seemed so clearly a battle in an ongoing class war. Despite almost two months of remarkable discipline and solidarity, however, the strike failed to produce the tangible gains that were its immediate objective.[11] De Ambris and syndicalists elsewhere tried to make the best of the

defeat by emphasizing the strike's educational value and long-term revolutionary significance, but the workers themselves were skeptical. The unfavorable outcome produced a disastrous drop in the membership of the Parma Chamber of Labor, from 28,719 on January 1, 1908, to 7,034 on January 1, 1909.[12] De Ambris fled to Switzerland and would return to Italy only in 1913.

The pattern of events in Ferrara and Piacenza, two other major syndicalist centers, was similarly unfavorable to syndicalism from 1907 to 1910. Here, too, initial successes in achieving relatively limited goals produced confidence and expanding membership. But a second phase quickly followed, as the unions stepped up their demands and the employers prepared for more concerted resistance. In each area, the outcome was a major unsuccessful strike, producing huge membership losses, frustration, and finally stagnation by 1909 and 1910.[13] The syndicalists simply had not devised a viable tactic, one combining tangible benefits with revolutionary psychological development.

With their movement in crisis, the syndicalists sought to regroup at two consecutive meetings in Bologna in December 1910. The Second Italian Syndicalist Congress, in the tradition of the Ferrara meeting of 1907, included individual syndicalists and delegates of about sixty syndicalist intellectual and propaganda groups; the Second Congress of Direct Action, a follow-up of a similar meeting held in 1909, included the representatives of syndicalist unions and had responsibility for strategy on the economic level. The major fruit of these meetings was a Committee for Direct Action, established by the union leaders to coordinate the activities of the syndicalist organizations within the CGL. The new entity did little during its first year, but as the cracks in the Giolittian edifice widened with the Libyan War of 1911–12, the committee began to step up its activities, attacking the reformist majority in the CGL for its hesitancy in light of the wartime challenge. Friction between the syndicalists and reformists grew so intense during the spring of 1912 that the CGL finally declared adherence to the Committee for Direct Action incompatible with CGL membership.[14] Meanwhile, the committee was reestablished on firmer footing as the syndicalists finally began moving toward schism.

In a series of bitterly polemical articles, Alceste De Ambris condemned the CGL for its increasingly hard line against syndicalist organizations and for its continuing refusal to admit the Parma Chamber of Labor.[15] He sought to blame the CGL for the coming schism in the organized working class, but he had no doubt such a division was necessary. Illusions about the viability of unity had only paralyzed syndicalism, and it was time to overcome qualms about schism and organize a rival confederation. When the syndicalists were ousted

from the Milanese Chamber of Labor early in 1912, Filippo Corridoni insisted, like De Ambris, that it was no longer possible to ignore the existence of two irreconcilable mentalities in the Italian proletariat—the one revolutionary and syndicalist, the other legalistic and reformist.[16]

Finally, in November 1912, the schism in the Italian labor movement became formal: a variety of antireformist organizations, including anarchists and republicans as well as syndicalists, joined together at Modena to form the Unione Sindacale Italiana (USI). After six years of hesitation and vacillation, this definitive break with the GCL provided a major boost to syndicalist confidence, but the future remained clouded, partly because it was not clear how effective such a heterogeneous confederation could be.[17] Nor had the syndicalists begun to reverse the membership losses of the previous years. The USI represented about 100,000 workers, while the syndicalists alone had represented about 200,000 as of late 1907.[18] The new USI had little more than one-fourth the numerical strength of the GCL.

In 1912 and 1913, however, syndicalism seemed to be gaining again in the industrial cities, where some of the workers were becoming more militant in response to the growing crisis of the Giolittian compromise. In Turin, for example, reformists had effectively excluded syndicalism from the labor movement after some defeated strikes in 1907, but by 1911 membership losses and financial problems were clearly weakening the reformist organizations vis-à-vis the increasingly militant employers. Some of the auto workers split off from their reformist federation and turned to syndicalism for an alternative, but the poorly conceived strike which the syndicalists led early in 1912 quickly discredited syndicalism in the eyes of the workers once again. The strike lasted an impressive sixty-five days, but a well-organized lockout finally forced the workers to settle on disastrous terms, including the loss of gains previously won. Bitter recriminations against syndicalism followed among the Turinese workers.[19]

In Milan, too, what seemed a promising revival of revolutionary syndicalism in the labor movement quickly fizzled. By early 1913, sectors of the organized industrial proletariat were growing frustrated with reformism as the employers became increasingly intransigent in wage disputes. Filippo Corridoni and his Unione Sindacale Milanese (USM), founded in March 1913, offered the militant tactical alternative which the situation seemed to require. Although Corridoni won considerable support for a series of militant strikes in Milan during the summer of 1913, effective employer lockouts and reformist opposition eventually produced defeat here as well. Corridoni himself was arrested and jailed for inciting to violence during the strike wave of 1913. On the eve of Red Week and war in 1914, Corridoni's organization in Milan

was clearly in crisis.[20] As usual, the unsuccessful outcome of the 1913 strikes had caused a disastrous decline in membership and had led the USM to the verge of bankruptcy. It suspended publication of its newspaper and even applied to the Socialist city government for a subsidy and for office space. At one point, the USM sought membership in the CGL—without success.

On the national level, there was already considerable disillusionment and frustration in the USI by December 1913, when the organization held its second national congress. Writing just after this meeting, Tullio Masotti articulated explicitly syndicalist anxieties for the future, lamenting the ongoing problems of finance, membership, and regional imbalance.[21] The congress had decided to transfer the seat of the USI from Parma to more industrial Milan, but financial problems forced the organization to postpone the move indefinitely.[22] By 1914, it was clear that the vision in 1912 of a second chance for syndicalism had been only a mirage. Militant tactics continued to make syndicalism its own worst enemy. But it was not obvious that reformist tactics were more likely to produce a new order.

All the failures after early 1905 led the syndicalists to emphasize elitism and to stress that the revolution was a long way off, but not to abandon the essentials of their revolutionary strategy. For the time being, in the labor movement, they could only work harder at syndicalist organization and practice, so they stubbornly continued to exhort the working class and to promote militant strikes. The fact that syndicalism was presently confined to a conscious elite within the proletariat was a symptom of weakness, not a source of virtue.[23] All the discussion about "elitism" in syndicalist circles during these years concerned not ultimate values or goals, but merely the tactical question of working class schism or unity. Tommaso Sorricchio criticized the elitism of Olivetti and others because he favored continued unity within the CGL, while those calling for schism wanted to face up to the fact that syndicalism was presently confined to a minority.[24]

Since 1907 the syndicalists had faced tactical choices not only on the level of trade union activity, but also on the political level. Here there was apparently more scope for innovation in response to the failure of syndicalism to convert most of the working class. The situation seemed to call for some sort of supplementary, more purely political activity—beyond work in the labor movement. The nature of this supplementary activity depended on the nature of the obstacles impeding evolution according to the syndicalist blueprint. So we must consider the syndicalists' attempts to understand these obstacles before examining the political departures they were beginning to discuss at the same time.

Beginning in 1906, with the founding of the CGL, the syndicalists complained sporadically that the organized workers, despite a few inspiring exceptions, were proving depressingly reformist and unheroic—more concerned about immediate economic gains than about the creation of socialism.[25] By 1910, such disillusionment had become the dominant note in all syndicalist discussion. The organizer Enrico Loncao, for example, complained that the solidarity and self-sacrifice so crucial for the creation of socialism were seldom evident in the Italian labor movement: "All the proletarian agitations, whether led by syndicalists or not, have found their inevitable and fatal outcome in increases in salaries and in some decrease in working hours. Whenever a question of general import for the proletarian class has arisen (a killing, a violation of the right to strike or of the right of association and so forth), the proletariat has remained indifferent or almost so."[26]

In 1904, the organized labor movement had seemed so promising, so pregnant with new energies and virtues; why had it ended up repudiating syndicalism? Through reformism, the syndicalists claimed, the present system had corrupted the most advanced elements of the Italian working class. It turned out that the proletariat, too, could win favors from the parliamentary state, thanks to its links with the Socialist party. The organized workers had succumbed to bourgeois materialism, so Italian socialism was nothing but a parliamentary sham, another narrow interest group, hardly the bearer of superior values for society.[27]

For now, the syndicalists were not willing to conclude that they had been on the wrong track in the first place. The model was sound, they assumed, but unforeseen problems, apparently of a political and cultural sort, had obstructed evolution according to the model. Still, new questions about the problems in Italian society were necessary—and so perhaps was a supplementary program to overcome those obstacles. Since individual syndicalists differed over what had gone wrong and over what should be done, dissension and even fragmentation of the syndicalist current resulted, especially after 1910. There was some divergence between intellectuals and organizers, and there were contacts between syndicalists and other critics of the established order. Subsequent developments would prove, however, that the fragmentation was not irrevocable and that the syndicalists, while asking new questions, were not losing their intellectual autonomy. They reconverged in the struggle for intervention in 1914, and they subsequently sought to weave into a new synthesis the insights and proposals that had been developed during the period of fragmentation.

The one major syndicalist who diverged from the mainstream for good during this period was Arturo Labriola. He understood the reasons for the failure of syndicalism in different terms than his colleagues

and thus called for a different form of supplementary activity. When we see how the others differed from Labriola, we will begin to grasp the basis of the revision that would lead to fascism.

Labriola was one of the first to admit that syndicalism was not working out in practice. In 1906, he ceased publishing *Avanguardia socialista* and returned to Naples, where he developed a successful law practice and taught economics at the university. He remained active in syndicalist intellectual circles, serving as coeditor of Olivetti's *Pagine libere* from its inception in December 1906 until 1909, but he was increasingly divorced from the practice of revolutionary syndicalism in the labor movement. At the syndicalist congress at Ferrara in 1907, Labriola went along with the decision to leave the Socialist party without enthusiasm or confidence in the future.[28] And now he began the reappraisal that would lead him to diverge from his colleagues and to win, first, election to the Chamber of Deputies in 1913 and, second, appointment as Minister of Labor in Giolitti's postwar government of 1920.

Labriola remained a syndicalist in theory, but Italy, he felt, was simply not ready for syndicalism, which could only be put off for the future. He insisted on syndicalist orthodoxy, refusing to tamper with the doctrine, and argued that there was nothing to be done directly to promote syndicalism at the moment. He had serious misgivings about the practice of revolutionary syndicalism under organizers like De Ambris and Corridoni. The great Parma strike of 1908, for example, gave him no comfort, since the workers involved were overwhelmingly agrarian; syndicalism could emerge only within the most advanced sectors of the industrial proletariat. Excessive use of the general strike, he feared, was discrediting syndicalism in the eyes of the working class.[29] But still much could be done at present—and had to be done if syndicalism was ever to emerge in Italy.

Labriola sought to determine what the immediate problems were, and what had gone wrong with the syndicalist blueprint, in his perceptive dissection of the Italian political system, *Storia di dieci anni*, published in 1910. In pages that can still be read with profit today, he showed how important sectors of the new industrial proletariat had emerged together with sectors of the new industrial bourgeoisie under the umbrella of the tariff of 1887, with all that it implied about the relationship between the economy and the state in Italy.[30] Virtually from birth, much of the working class was thus involved in the network linking industry to the state through protection and military orders. The advent of Giolitti, Labriola argued, meant the political triumph of these new industrial sectors after the old political class, represented by Crispi and Pelloux, had been proven bankrupt during the crisis of the

1890s. But while Giolitti was genuinely a departure, he ended up encouraging the unhealthy, speculative propensities of the Italian industrial bourgeoisie, rather than the productive potential that had recently become evident. The Giolittian system was simply a network of favors for groups with political strength, including the Socialists; and the Socialists, in working with Giolitti, had helped to maintain a system which not only impeded rational economic development, but also exploited the South.[31]

Labriola was coming to agree with Salvemini about the basis of present problems and about the strategy for radical change appropriate in the short term. In *Storia di dieci anni*, he quoted at length, and with explicit approval, Salvemini's analysis of the Giolittian system.[32] Like Salvemini, Labriola concluded that socialists should devote their efforts to structural reforms, focusing on the South. Turati's brand of reformism could not produce serious change, but there was still a place in Italy for a different kind of reformist bloc, including progressive bourgeois sectors as well as socialists and workers.[33] In Labriola's practice, socialism and radical democracy became interchangeable as he sought to galvanize broad popular support for an attack on immediate southern problems, such as illiteracy, the land tenure system, and poor communications. The obvious institutional base for this effort was not the industrial labor movement, but parliament, which Labriola entered in 1913 as a deputy representing Naples. He was leaving revolutionary syndicalism far behind. De Ambris's *L'internazionale* commented on Labriola's election campaign with a mixture of sadness and sarcasm.[34] The syndicalist newspaper proclaimed Labriola's reform proposals to be incompatible with the syndicalism he still claimed to profess; the new monopolies he advocated, for example, would only strengthen the state. And Georges Sorel, in a letter to Mario Missiroli in the aftermath of the 1913 election, expressed continued admiration for Labriola's intellectual prowess, but wondered what Labriola could possibly hope to accomplish as a member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies.[35]

Although Labriola's evolution was in part a return to his radical populist origins, he still sought to portray Italy's problems and the process of change he advocated in reasonably orthodox Marxist terms. The South was so backward because the Spaniards and the Bourbons had systematically obstructed the formation of a capitalist bourgeoisie. In Italy in general, syndicalist socialism was presently impossible because the bourgeoisie had not yet fully triumphed, creating a genuine liberal-democratic order. When Labriola sought to explain the persistence of prebourgeois elements in contemporary Italy, including the unhealthy relationship between politics and economics and the pecu-

liarities of Italian parliamentary government, he pinpointed the monarchy as the essential problem. The monarchical, not the parliamentary, side of the Italian state was responsible for the obstacles to syndicalism.[36] Thus Labriola was willing to work within parliament, collaborating with progressive bourgeois elements, to reform the system, to dilute the power of the monarchy, and to complete the bourgeois revolution. Only in this way, he argued, could socialists remove the obstacles to normal progress toward a new society.[37]

In his quest for reforms, Labriola was willing to serve in Giolitti's postwar government as Minister of Labor, but he continued to view events in terms of a reasonably orthodox Marxist perspective. He found Italian fascism, for example, to be symptomatic of a general postwar crisis of international capitalism. In relatively backward countries, the insecure capitalist bourgeoisie found it necessary to supplement its economic dictatorship with political dictatorship.[38]

By 1913, Labriola was well along the road that would lead him into Giolitti's government in 1920 and into exile as an antifascist a few years later. At the same time, however, many other syndicalists were making the first tentative steps in a revision that would lead them to fascism. They responded to the impasse of syndicalism in a more innovative—and more treacherous—way, because they doubted that the corrupting patterns which Labriola had identified could be understood so easily, in traditional Marxist terms. They felt that it was not the monarchy that lay at the root of the unhealthy features of the Italian state, but the parliamentary system. Parliamentary government and the Italian political class seemed to be autonomous problems which eluded explanation in Marxist terms. As the expected evolution toward syndicalism bogged down, the syndicalists' critique of the existing political system deepened, becoming more central to their position.

Given the nature of Italy's political problems, catch-up reforms did not seem to offer a way out, although years would pass before the syndicalists would begin to define precisely what was necessary instead. Ultimately, however, they would not fall into Labriola's dualism, making syndicalism a distant ideal unrelated to immediate Italian political practice. They sought to refine syndicalism, to make it the basis for solving the problems that had impeded syndicalism in the first place. If the problem was monarchy, as Labriola believed, then parliamentary democracy was the solution and syndicalism had to wait; but if the problem was parliament, then perhaps a redefined syndicalism could be the solution.

Labriola's orthodox categories were attractive, however, since they were familiar and easy to grasp and since it was not clear how to devise an alternative. The syndicalists sometimes sounded like Labriola,

blaming the monarchy and the forces it nurtured for what seemed to be only prebourgeois lags in Italian political and economic life. In his *Sindacalismo e repubblica*, published posthumously in 1921 but circulating in syndicalist and Milanese leftist circles by 1915, Filippo Corridoni vacillated, sometimes accenting Italy's precapitalist backwardness, sometimes implying that the problems of liberal Italy were modern and autonomous. Nevertheless, Corridoni's tone differed from Labriola's; he was moving, haltingly and reluctantly, toward a new conception.

Corridoni began his diagnosis in orthodox fashion, emphasizing the power of the prebourgeois elements, especially the monarchy, which had kept both parliamentary government and the industrial bourgeoisie relatively weak in Italy.[39] But there were tensions in Corridoni's account, for the villain responsible for the unhealthy features of Italian political life seemed to be a political class that was a product neither of backwardness nor of modern capitalism:[40]

> . . . the state is always controlled, as Mosca has shown convincingly, by a "political class" composed of a handful of people who make of politics an unscrupulous profession and who, while originating from bourgeois stock, are more or less the excess or dross of the productive bourgeoisie itself.
>
> In order to maintain their own power, these elements need to keep the active bourgeoisie far from the management of the state, and they succeed in doing so by favoring not its virtues and strengths, but its vices and weaknesses.[41]

Corridoni considered monarchical states especially prone to this pattern, although he did not explain why. But in any case, the political problem for him was not merely a function of monarchy and backwardness, but something more modern and hard to explain, perhaps having to do with the parliamentary system itself. In using Mosca, in fact, Corridoni was well on his way to a postorthodox interpretation of the problem of the Italian state.

Corridoni believed that Italian society was capable of something better, but the dominant political patterns undermined its potential, draining its energies and resources for unproductive uses.[42] As a way out, he called for decentralization, for greater democracy to highlight the futility of the parliamentary system, even for a republic. But the key was to overturn protection and the whole set of corrupting relationships between the political and economic spheres in Italy. Free trade, Corridoni argued bravely, would ruin two-thirds of Italy's industry, but he found such a thorough purge essential if "that bit of vitality and health that our economic organism still has" was to be saved.[43]

Proletarian pressures, including violence, could have stimulated Italy's inert bourgeoisie, but Corridoni argued that the proletariat, too,

had been corrupted by the political system. For the time being, the workers were part of the problem, so some sort of supplementary movement was needed to bring about the essential changes. Sensing that Labriola's reforms, pursued through parliament, would not be sufficient, Corridoni suggested, very tentatively, that a preliminary revolution might be necessary instead.[44] This would be a revolution in which the proletariat would have no direct role. By implication, since the problem was centered in the present political system, this revolution would make radical political changes, attacking the political class and perhaps even the parliamentary system itself.

As the syndicalists sought to determine what had gone wrong, the parliamentary state began to seem the major obstacle. But since the bourgeois groups represented in parliament were not promoting rational industrial development, the parliamentary state could hardly be portrayed in orthodox Marxist terms, as the executive committee of the capitalist bourgeoisie. And if the state's class character was not to blame, why was it that the liberal parliamentary state neither represented nor protected the collective interest? The problem of the Italian state led Corridoni to move, very hesitantly, beyond the old orthodoxy; Paolo Mantica went a bit farther in the antiparliamentary polemics he wrote between 1910 and 1914.

Mantica sought to explain the connection between parliamentary politics and the weakness of Italian society. The liberal regime was "a system of greedy and pervasive exploitation which has transformed Italy into a kind of insurance company which has the Chamber of Deputies as its general headquarters. Everyone applies there; the glances of all the greedy and all the starving are directed there, and there the deputies tower as the indispensable intermediaries, the supreme dispensers of the national manna."[45] In Italy parliamentary government "has constantly increased the monopolizing tendency of the state and has discouraged or impeded any spontaneous activity: ultimately, it has founded an anonymous, oppressive tyranny of the basest minority of politicians. . . . The parliamentary system can maintain itself only because of the situation of social disorganization and the crisis of languor that social life is going through."[46]

Writing in Orano's *La lupa* in 1911, Mantica described this spirit of parasitism as the essential characteristic of any parliamentary regime, whether monarchist or republican.[47] He sensed that he had discovered an autonomous problem, one that could not be reduced either to problems of capitalism or to prebourgeois remnants in Italy. The other syndicalists were beginning to see the situation in similar terms. According to Alfonso De Pietri-Tonelli, parliamentary government "has put the state in the hands of a class of bureaucrats and politicians . . . who are not the direct expression of the bourgeois class."[48] It was this political class, and the political system generally, that had enervated Italian society and warped Italian economic development, undercutting the syndicalist model in the process.

It was possible to argue, of course, that parliamentary government was not very healthy in Italy because the country had not gone far enough along the road to democracy, and when Italy finally got universal manhood suffrage in 1912, some assumed that a happier era for parliamentary government was dawning. Arturo Labriola had enough faith in the prospects for parliament under the new suffrage law to stand for election to the Chamber in 1913. The advent of universal suffrage forced the other syndicalists to specify what they found inadequate about parliamentary government—and even to consider how syndicalism might provide the basis for an alternative.

Paolo Mantica discussed the matter explicitly in October 1913, in one of the most revealing syndicalist statements of the prewar period.[49] A significant combination of confidence and lack of confidence in popular political capacities informed Mantica's thinking. He wanted the popular will to determine public policy, but he denied that universal suffrage provided an adequate mechanism. The suffrage system enabled the individual to participate only in a passive and discontinuous way. In voting, the individual was subject to momentary caprice and to the most superficial and egotistical interests—and so did not really express his will. The state and the political process simply remained too distant from ordinary individuals. Consequently, Mantica concluded, universal suffrage would yield even more corruption and favoritism, as deputies pandered to the worst instincts of their constituents in order to get elected and reelected.

Although the alternative he had in mind was not at all clear, Mantica suggested, for the first time in the syndicalist literature, that syndicalism itself could provide an alternative to political participation based on universal suffrage and the parliamentary system. Rather than swallow the myths about democracy, Mantica argued, the workers should organize, should multiply the centers of life, will, and energy in society. He envisioned some sort of continuous political participation through socioeconomic organizations: "The genuine and lasting will of the individual can only be expressed in action. It is the man who acts, participating in an effective and continuous process, who is a social element, a component in the world of production, a citizen—not the man who thinks he is, simply because he exercises a vain and ephemeral right. Socially, this latter individual amounts to nothing at all."[50] Social organizations based on economic function offered the individual the continuous involvement and supraindividual framework for his

activity that the liberal state was too remote to provide. Mantica found the necessary network of organizations already emerging in society. The society, in fact, was presently outgrowing the state, which could no longer "contain all the life of the people" and which thus had to be replaced—by the society itself, understood as a network of economically based organizations. Faith in universal suffrage and parliamentary democracy only prevented the full flowering of the necessary capacities in society.

Although his vision was imprecise, Mantica was sharpening the syndicalist focus on the problems in Italian society that had made syndicalism appealing in the first place. Popular political apathy and incompetence, which universal suffrage could not heal, made it possible for parliamentary corruption to go on; the existing state was too weak to order the society, including the economy. A new system of socio-economic self-government, based on economic organizations, could provide an antidote. Mantica was on his way to bridging the gap between syndicalism and immediate political problems that remained so wide in Labriola's thinking. Syndicalism was for now; it was relevant to immediate political problems and was not merely to be held in abeyance until those problems were overcome. At this point Mantica could offer only a cluster of images—social organization and energy, popular political capacity, continuous participation, productive activity —which he sensed were interrelated, even though he was not able to establish the links among them. The subsequent evolution of Italian syndicalism proved that this embryonic vision was capable of further development, both in theory and in practice.

Mantica's conception seemed to require a supplementary revolutionary force, outside the labor movement, but he remained tactically cautious, fearful of jeopardizing proletarian autonomy.[51] Some of his colleagues, however, were a bit more adventuresome.

In their meetings from 1907 on, the syndicalists had to choose a course of action not only for the trade union level, but also for the political level. As soon as they left the Socialist party in 1907, some of them began to contemplate a new political organization, something stronger than the loose and ineffective Federation of Syndicalist Groups created in 1907. By 1910, when the failure of syndicalist ideas in the unions had become obvious, there was increasing interest among the syndicalists in forming a revolutionary party to complement the labor movement. At first, the accents were orthodox: a revolutionary party was needed to educate the organized workers in the revolutionary syndicalist conception of socialism, the crucial task which the Socialist party, with its reformist orientation, could not be expected to carry out.

Such a party would have only this temporary pedagogical role; the labor syndicate was still the crucial organ of revolution.[52] As the syndicalists considered the obstacles to their original program, however, they began to contemplate a more grandiose kind of political supplement—a revolutionary bloc to clear away the obstacles as well as educate the workers. Even nonsyndicalist revolutionaries could participate. Still, such a bloc would not be intended to make the ultimate revolution, or to set itself up as a leadership cadre vis-à-vis the labor movement, but only to do whatever was necessary to make syndicalism possible.[53]

The proposals of Panunzio, Alfredo Polledro, and others for a syndicalist party grew sharp disagreement from more cautious syndicalists like Franz Weiss, Tommaso Sorricchio, and Enrico Leone, who were less willing to admit that revolutionary syndicalism in Italy was the creation of a group of intellectuals, not a spontaneous proletarian expression.[54] These syndicalists were more patient and more absolute in their commitment to the proletariat, but their inflexibility produced increasing ambiguity, since the workers showed so little interest in revolutionary syndicalism. If any organized proletarian expression is syndicalist, as Weiss argued in 1908, then disillusionment with the proletariat is impossible, and revolutionary syndicalism becomes indistinguishable from the revisionist laborism of Graziadei and Bissolati.[55] Weiss was implying that the proletariat could be syndicalist without being revolutionary, yet his own vision of the syndicalist future explicitly required certain new values which the existing Italian proletariat no longer seemed to be developing. In fact, these cautious syndicalists lamented Italian working class priorities just as bitterly as their more flexible colleagues did: Enrico Leone, for example, complained that the workers remained satisfied with the present system as long as their salaries increased.[56] Despite this disenchantment, however, Leone and his followers feared the consequences, especially for proletarian autonomy, of so uncertain an expedient as a revolutionary bloc or party.

These concerns were certainly plausible, but it was also plausible, and in some ways more consistent, to acknowledge that syndicalism did not necessarily coincide with the practice of the labor movement—and to conclude that supplementary activity might be legitimate. Still, this was a treacherous step, for those syndicalists who advocated a revolutionary party were implicitly admitting the contingency of their original commitment to the proletariat. During the first years of the century, its most advanced sectors had actually appeared to possess in embryo the qualities necessary to create a superior order. But syndicalist ideals and values were theoretically distinguishable from those of the

proletariat; if the workers did not adopt the syndicalist vision as their own, they could have no claim to a special historical role—or even to the special solicitude of socialist intellectuals.

This basic difference in perspective led to much internal squabbling during the period of defeat and disillusionment. Labriola periodically accused Leone and his followers, like Weiss and Sorricchio, of an excessively conservative tactical position bordering on reformist laborism. These relatively conservative syndicalists, on the other hand, condemned their more militant colleagues for advocating outmoded Blanquist tactics and for treating the strike as a kind of mystical exercise.[57] Given the seriousness of these differences, it is not surprising that the Bologna congresses of 1910 only produced further disillusionment and dissension among the syndicalists.[58] Labriola advocated a syndicalist party, but the majority followed Leone and repudiated the proposal, invoking the sacred principle of proletarian autonomy.

Continued frustration, however, made supplementary political activity seem all the more necessary to some of the syndicalists. And in July 1912, an interesting new possibility developed. With the Giolittian system suffering severe strains, and with Italy involved in the Libyan War, the left wing of the Italian Socialist party won control from the reformists at the party's national congress at Reggio Emilia. One result was the rise to national prominence of a remarkable young Socialist journalist, Benito Mussolini, who soon was named to the influential editorship of *Avanti!*, the party's national newspaper. Only twenty-nine years old, Mussolini seemed the bright young face of the Socialist party, and some, including Gaetano Salvemini, thought he might be the leader who could revitalize Italian socialism.

Mussolini and some of the syndicalists had come into contact before. For example, Mussolini and Olivetti had met in Zurich in March 1904, at the congress of the Italian Socialist Union of Switzerland.[59] Olivetti, who was nine years Mussolini's senior, was a leading figure in Italian socialism in Switzerland and served as president of the congress, while Mussolini was merely the delegate of the Geneva section. Olivetti, Panunzio, and the other syndicalists had an important influence on Mussolini during his years of intellectual maturation, which began with his stay in Switzerland from 1902 to 1904.[60] Mussolini was enthusiastic about Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* and frequently called himself a syndicalist.[61] But as a Socialist party man, he was never part of the syndicalist current, and by 1910 he certainly did not anticipate a significant role for revolutionary syndicalism in Italian socialism. After the syndicalist congresses of December 1910, Mussolini sarcastically denounced syndicalism for its divisiveness, incoherence, and futility.[62]

While Mussolini did learn from the Italian syndicalists and from Sorel, he borrowed selectively, creating a revolutionary conception of his own which departed from syndicalism, especially the Italian variety, in crucial respects. Most important, Mussolini did not share the syndicalists' belief in the pedagogical qualities of organization. In his conception, the unions were to be clearly subordinate to an elite party which would lead the revolution; the labor movement was only to provide the mass base. Indeed, the elite would use non-rational myths in order to galvanize the necessary mass support for revolution. Mussolini's conception was considerably more elitist and manipulative than that of the syndicalists; he did not have the same confidence in the workers' potential for initiative, responsibility, and lucid self-discipline, nor did he value decentralization and autonomy for socioeconomic groups as antidotes to underlying Italian problems. He was interested in the catastrophic, activist, and irrationalist elements in Sorelian syndicalism, precisely the elements that the Italian syndicalists played down.[63]

Writing early in 1913, Alceste De Ambris delineated the differences between the Mussolinian and syndicalist concepts of direct action.[64] He found Mussolini's notion too catastrophic, too close to old-fashioned popular insurrection, and emphasized the patient quality of syndicalism, which meant by direct action simply the activities of the modern labor organizations. The syndicalists wanted to teach the workers what they could accomplish on their own, without relying on intermediaries; they did not envision some sort of miraculous transformation, giving the working class a force it lacked objectively.

When the left wing won control of the Socialist party in 1912, the syndicalists certainly did not see Mussolini as one of their own. Nevertheless, Mussolini was no reformist, and with syndicalism in trouble, reappraisal of the relationship between syndicalism and the party seemed called for. As the left wings in their respective spheres, syndicalists and Mussolinians perhaps had enough in common for a tactical alliance. And indeed each group viewed the other as potential support—and assumed that ultimately, given the logic of revolution, the other side could only accept its leadership. The syndicalists could consider alliance with Mussolini and his party because they assumed that syndicalism was so much more realistic than anything the revolutionaries in the party had to offer that it was bound to establish its hegemony in the end.

De Ambris discussed the possibilities in a long dialogue with Giuseppe De Falco, an articulate member of the party's left wing and editor of *Avvenire del lavoratore*, the organ of the Italian Socialist party in Switzerland.[65] To De Falco, the new situation suggested the kind of

symbiosis between syndicates and revolutionary party that some of the syndicalists had advocated in 1910. Ultimately, De Falco admitted, only the workers, through their own autonomous organizations, could create socialism, but there was much a revolutionary socialist party could do to further the process. Rather than worry about electoral successes and parliamentary activity, such a party would work, first, to infuse revolutionary socialist ideals into the labor movement, and, second, to promote the necessary political and economic context for the unfolding of syndicalism. As far as De Falco was concerned, revolutionary socialism was now at a crossroads: as the now-dominant current in the party, it could no longer get by on doctrinal intransigence; if it did not renew itself through syndicalism, it would simply disintegrate.

At first, the symbiosis which De Falco proposed seemed at least possible to De Ambris; he felt that Mussolini's position had a certain logic, that it in some ways complemented syndicalism.[66] If Mussolini neglected the unions, it was only because of the present sorry state of the CGL and the Italian labor movement in general. As a genuine revolutionary, he would necessarily have a different attitude to the kind of labor movement the syndicalists were trying to create. The only problem, De Ambris argued, was that the majority even of the revolutionary current in the party was not as coherent as Mussolini and De Falco. Perhaps events would force the revolutionaries to clarify their thinking, but for the time being the syndicalists could only wait and see.

The events of 1913 in some ways favored and in some ways impeded a symbiosis. Mussolini solidified his position, clearly emerging as the dominant figure in the left wing of the party, thereby overcoming a major source of De Ambris's initial skepticism. Moreover, Mussolini looked with favor on the apparent revival of syndicalism in the labor movement during 1913. To be sure, he had misgivings about the schismatic USI, since he wanted the labor movement to become a unified mass base for revolution; he had opposed formation of the USI in the first place. But the syndicalists, especially Corridoni and his Unione Sindacale Milanese, could play a valuable role by winning the industrial workers away from reformism and back toward revolutionary militancy. Mussolini assumed that the party, with its elite of politically conscious revolutionaries, would ultimately assume the leadership of this militant mass base. So he was relatively supportive as Corridoni led the imposing Milanese general strike of May–June 1913. When the strike was finally defeated, Mussolini criticized revolutionary syndicalism, but only because he felt that greater unity among revolutionaries and more coherent leadership were essential if such strikes were to be productive. On the other hand, Mussolini bitterly denounced the

USM's follow-up strike of July–August 1913, which quickly fizzled. The general strike, he argued, was being used excessively—and with poor preparation; this could only alienate the workers and undermine the essential rank-and-file support for the revolutionaries.[67]

Mussolini's ambivalent attitude hardly converted the syndicalists to alliance with the Socialist party. Just after the strike of May and June, De Ambris severely scolded the party for its lack of support during the strike.[68] And a full-scale polemic developed after Mussolini's unsparing criticism of syndicalist methods in August. Many of the syndicalists, still stressing proletarian autonomy, continued to deny on principle that even a revolutionary Socialist party could be an ally of syndicalism.[69] Some of the others, however, were beginning to consider actually rejoining the party, since some political framework for present action seemed essential. One evening in November of 1913, a number of them met with Mussolini at a café in Bologna to discuss the options available. Panunzio and Leone were among those favoring a return to the party, but only if the syndicalists made the move as a group—not just as individuals.[70] Nothing came of this meeting, but frustration and restlessness were increasing among the syndicalists, many of whom were ripe for a shift in short-term alignments, despite the ongoing questions about the compatibility of Mussolinian socialism with syndicalism. The chance came in 1914, first with Red Week as a preliminary, then with the outbreak of the war and the struggle for Italian intervention.

Contrary to what some have argued, the Red Week uprising of June 1914 was not a crucial turning point in the evolution of Italian syndicalism; but it did mark a significant step in the direction in which many of the syndicalists were already moving. Alceste De Ambris, who considered the lessons of Red Week most explicitly, was not disillusioned by its outcome, for he was hardly expecting revolution in 1914; definitive syndicalist revolution was still a long way off. Instead, De Ambris was surprised at the revolutionary energies and the hostility to the status quo which had welled up spontaneously during Red Week. The situation in Italy was more volatile than he had realized. If directed by a new revolutionary coalition party, these unsuspected energies could make possible the sweeping changes necessary for the normal development of syndicalism in the future.[71] So De Ambris began to insist that syndicalists, revolutionary Socialists, anarchists, and republicans, despite their continuing differences, should strengthen the links that had developed spontaneously during Red Week and work together for a kind of preliminary revolution to create the context for syndicalist development. The spectacle of Red Week, with the people spontaneously rising up against the existing order, obviously

fascinated De Ambris, but he retained a sense of the limits of such popular uprisings, along with the newer, specifically syndicalist values he had developed over the past decade.

De Ambris anticipated that some of his syndicalist colleagues were bound to object: "Yes, I know: it is not a matter of syndicalism in the rigid sense of the word. Syndicalism is carried out on the economic level, and a political struggle is at issue here. But on the other hand, is it not true that certain political conquests are indispensable to create the atmosphere necessary for syndicalism to live and develop?"[72] Agostino Lanzillo was not convinced: to drag the workers into insurrectionary experiments mobilized by a political party could only compromise proletarian self-reliance and undermine the possibility of syndicalism in the future.[73] Red Week, he insisted, had revealed not unsuspected revolutionary energies, but the futility of revolutionary blocs and popular insurrections—and the superiority of the syndicalist method. From the syndicalist perspective, both De Ambris and Lanzillo were partly correct. Syndicalism was at an impasse, and supplementary activity to make political changes was apparently necessary. At the same time, however, there really was a danger that the original content of syndicalism would be compromised by the shift in strategic emphasis that De Ambris proposed. But it would be possible to bridge the gap if syndicalism itself, instead of remaining suspended for the future, could be revised and made relevant to the solution of immediate political problems. De Ambris and Lanzillo, despite their disagreement in 1914, were both on the way to the neosyndicalist synthesis that fully emerged only after World War I. The key was to make syndicalism the basis of an alternative to liberal parliamentary politics, in the way that Mantica had already described in tentative terms.

Lanzillo opposed the revolutionary alliance which De Ambris proposed in part because he expected that it would become preoccupied with the role of the monarchy.[74] For Lanzillo, the question of the monarchy was largely irrelevant—a republic of politicians, he said, would be no improvement over a monarchy. For the syndicalist current to get involved with Italy's old antimonarchist forces, with their outmoded priorities, could only obstruct the maturation of the proletariat. De Ambris was less worried about contamination, but for him, too, the issue of monarchy versus republic increasingly seemed irrelevant. In proposing the goals for the projected revolutionary alliance, he specifically denied that the monarchy was the underlying Italian political problem.[75] He found the source of Italy's problems instead in the highly centralized, bureaucratic quality of the Italian state, which seemed to be stifling and corrupting the society. De Ambris and Lanzillo were both moving toward the new conception of Italian political problems

that would eventually enable them to combine syndicalism with immediate political action.

While the syndicalists were debating the lessons of Red Week, the European war broke out, raising new questions and possibilities. During the previous decade, most of the syndicalists had maintained an orthodox antimilitarist position, although a few had occasionally expressed interest in the moral and regenerative qualities of war. Writing in 1904, Sergio Panunzio argued in a general way that wars can have a progressive impact: peace is conservative, while war creates new situations.[76] Labriola developed some of the same ideas in an article on Gustave Hervé in 1907, while Panunzio went further in 1908, in an article clearly influenced by Pareto.[77] After contrasting the pacifism typical of a declining bourgeois elite with the combativeness of an emerging proletarian elite, Panunzio argued that war can have a revolutionary impact both on its participants and on situations. By implication, participation in a war could enable a new, tightly united elite to emerge. To "Calcante," a periodic contributor to *Pagine libere*, war seemed the only possible source of regeneration for Italy, now that the socialist movement had degenerated "into a despicable organization of local clienteles."[78]

By 1911, with syndicalism in disarray, three leading syndicalists were prepared to follow the logic of these ideas in practice and take their chances on a war. Olivetti, Labriola, and Orano outraged most of their colleagues by advocating proletarian and socialist support for Italy's imperialistic war with Turkey over Libya. These mavericks supported the war primarily because of the revolutionary psychological effects they felt it might have on the Italian workers and on Italian society. Labriola framed the question dramatically: "O my comrades, do you know why the Italian proletariat is not fit to make a revolution? For precisely the same reasons that it is not fit to wage war. Let the proletariat get used to fighting seriously, and then you will see that it will learn to strike the bourgeoisie itself! Make it possible for us to break out of our customary stinking laziness! Today perhaps there is no enterprise more revolutionary than this to attempt in Italy." The decadence of the proletariat was only an aspect of the overall decadence of Italian society, and war, continued Labriola, would force the society as a whole to change: "[War] will make us more serious; it will accustom us to a deeper examination of things, to a more vital and effective way of thinking. It will give to us Italians a sense of our strength as a nation. Victorious or defeated, we will overcome all the dreadful superficiality of our customary opinions. War will impose on us new, more precise problems, having greater importance and more enduring consequences than those to which we are accustomed. It will be a tremendous and

painful experience, but under that pedagogy we will remake ourselves."[79] In the same way, Paolo Orano expected the Libyan War to force both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat to strengthen themselves, thereby rekindling the class struggle and paving the way for revolution.[80] Whatever the plausibility of such assumptions, these syndicalists were not advocating war as a means to overcome class conflict and to create national solidarity. Clinging to orthodoxy, they envisioned the war experience as the kind of preliminary revolution Italy required before syndicalism could fully develop.

Labriola, Olivetti, and Orano were the only leading syndicalists to support the Libyan War. Enrico Leone wrote a book criticizing Italy's lust for Libya, and *Pagine libere*, by now the official organ of Italian syndicalism, was forced to cease publication because of the bitter dispute among its editors over the issue.[81] Those like De Ambris who attacked the three defectors opposed the war for traditional socialist reasons. This imperialistic venture could only reinforce the reactionary elements in Italian society—the militarism and nationalism—that were obstacles to the coming of socialism. Proletarian support would compromise the class separation and autonomy crucial for the elaboration of nonbourgeois values.[82] But Giulio Barni, in the most sensitive syndicalist critique of the Libyan War, admitted that his adversaries' emphasis on the educational value of war had some merit.[83] Apparently a different war, fought for a nobler cause—one related to the fortunes of socialism and thus more valuable pedagogically—could win more enthusiastic syndicalist support.

Well before 1914, some syndicalists had admitted that, in certain circumstances, the proletariat could have a major stake in the outcome of a European war. Paolo Mazzoldi, writing in 1905, insisted that socialists had to be concerned with all the obstacles to the free and natural emergence of socialism on the international plane, above all the militarism, imperialism, and protectionism which Germany especially represented.[84] A German victory in a European war would threaten democracy and thus seriously affect the prospects of the European proletariat. In the event of war between France and Germany, Mazzoldi concluded, the Italian workers would have to support Italian intervention against Germany and offer their full support to the national war effort.

When in 1914 Italian leftists sought the best response to the European war, the syndicalists began with the line of argument which Mazzoldi had developed in 1905. Since the argument had a certain logic, it provided the syndicalists with an orthodox veneer for their support of intervention and war. But deeper concerns were also at work as the syndicalists began the pivotal period of their political evolution.

5 / *Socialist Society and the Italian Nation*

As Austria-Hungary prepared for a showdown in the Balkans after the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo, Italy invoked the Triple Alliance in an attempt to win compensation for any Austrian territorial gains. Despite German pressures, the Austrians dragged their feet, and on August 2, 1914, five days after Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, Italy announced her intention to remain neutral in the developing European war. This left her in a flexible position, and she was courted by both sides as the war bogged down in a stalemate during the months that followed. After the declaration of neutrality in August, however, there was no longer a serious chance that Italy would actively intervene on the side of Austria-Hungary, Italy's hereditary enemy and present rival in the Adriatic and the Balkans. But Austria, still prodded by Germany, became increasingly generous in offering Italy compensation for staying neutral. On the other hand, Italy could win even more attractive gains, including the Italian-speaking areas still within the Habsburg Empire, if she intervened actively on the side of the Entente.

With the Russian successes in Galicia in March of 1915, Italy began negotiating in earnest with the Entente powers, fearing a separate peace between Austria-Hungary and Russia that would leave Italy empty-handed. Negotiations with Austria proceeded simultaneously, but when Austrian offers of compensation still failed to satisfy growing Italian appetites, Foreign Minister Sidney Sonnino finally came to terms with the Entente. The secret Treaty of London, signed April 26, awarded Italy generous territorial compensation at the expense of the Habsburg Empire. In exchange, Italy was to intervene on the side of the Entente within one month. She entered the war on May 24, badly divided by the intervention issue itself.