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.

At first, there was a broad consensus in the country for neutrality, and most Italians remained opposed to war throughout the debate over intervention between August 1914 and May 1915. Catholics and socialists were generally neutralist, and so were most of the liberals, who agreed with Giolitti that Italy, since she was unprepared for a major war, should settle for the lucrative compensation she could win by remaining neutral. The majority in parliament, still loyal to Giolitti, similarly opposed intervention.

But almost immediately dissenters stepped forward: first, radicals from the old Masonic and democratic traditions, long loyal to France, then people from other parts of the political spectrum. Liberals like Luigi Albertini, democratic socialists like Salvemini and Leonida Bissolati, the Nationalists, the syndicalists, the futurists, much of the young educated elite, and ultimately Mussolini and a few revolutionary socialists joined the interventionist current. They had in common only their commitment to Italian intervention and their belief that, one way or another, the war experience would force Italy out of the stasis of the Giolittian system. Especially during the "radiant days" of May 1915, interventionists mounted impressive demonstrations, sometimes threatening to challenge the monarchy itself if intervention was not forthcoming. But those in charge of Italian foreign policy—Sonnino, Prime Minister Antonio Salandra, and the king—committed Italy to war for conventional territorial and military reasons, not because they were coerced by an interventionist minority in the piazzas. Still, it looked as if the interventionists, as a minority using direct action, had succeeded in imposing their will on the inert majority in the country, represented by the neutralist Giolittian majority in parliament.[1]

The leading syndicalists came out for intervention quickly and almost unanimously. Speaking in Milan on August 18, at a meeting called by the USI to consider the war, De Ambris made the first tentative step, suggesting that it might prove necessary for the syndicalists—and the workers—to support Italian intervention.[2] A German victory would threaten severely the bourgeois democratic order, which was a crucial prerequisite for the development of a syndicalist society. Hence the outcome of the war was by no means irrelevant for the proletariat, and if Italian intervention should prove necessary to tip the scales against Germany, the proletariat must be ready to support the national effort. De Ambris ventured only haltingly beyond this defensive and still reasonably orthodox posture in his initial interventionist speech. He claimed that a victorious war would have such beneficial economic, political, and moral consequences as to constitute nothing less than a revolution. "To be sure," he was quick to add, "this is not yet *our* revolution; but it is perhaps necessary to free the world of

all the cumbersome debris that still survives from the middle ages." So even though the war could amount to the preliminary revolution that Italy needed, De Ambris retreated from the more flexible interpretation of the obstacles to real revolution he had offered after Red Week and back into the haven of orthodoxy. Here the obstacles are essentially feudal leftovers.

Despite the element of caution, De Ambris's speech made an enormous impression. It provoked much bitter hostility on the Italian Left, but it also marked the birth of revolutionary interventionism.[3] Almost all the other syndicalists quickly followed De Ambris, including organizers like Corridoni, Masotti, and Livio Ciardi, as well as intellectuals like Olivetti, Panunzio, and Lanzillo. Facing the challenge of war, the syndicalists reconverged, closing the gap between organizers and intellectuals that seemed to be developing after 1910. In October, Olivetti began publishing a new series of *Pagine libere*, which became the mouthpiece of the new group that some of the syndicalists quickly formed to promote intervention, the Fascio rivoluzionario d'azione internazionalista.[4] Although the syndicalists predominated, the Fascio brought together a variety of left interventionists; thus it not only consummated the reunification of the syndicalist current, but also pointed beyond, toward the wider regrouping of revolutionaries that some of the syndicalists had advocated before the war. On October 5, the organization issued its *Manifesto*, calling on the workers to support intervention and stressing that a German victory would seriously compromise the prospects for European socialism.[5]

The accent on orthodoxy in this manifesto was typical. De Ambris had been quick to reply to critics of his initial interventionist speech that his position violated no tenet of syndicalist doctrine, that he was still an internationalist, an antipatriot, and a socialist. The other syndicalist interventionists also defended their orthodoxy: the war concerned the proletariat as a class and did not compromise its ultimate revolutionary aims; support of intervention involved no conversion to militarism and nationalism. It was only because the Italian bourgeoisie was so weak, Lanzillo argued, that the proletariat had to assume the responsibility for spearheading the defense of the national context for socialism against German reaction. The syndicalists liked to think that the war was a kind of international duty for the proletariat—to make the world safe for socialism.[6]

But the syndicalists' interventionist position, even when only carried this far, raised troubling questions about some traditional socialist canons. Interventionism did not necessarily mean a patriotic commitment to the existing nation, but if the interests of international socialism sometimes required support for national wars, then socialists had at

least to refine their conception of the relationships between the proletariat and the nation and between socialism and internationalism. The fact that socialists in Germany, France, and elsewhere rallied enthusiastically to their national war efforts raised further questions. Perhaps—in the short term, at least—the proletariats of different countries might have conflicting interests. The syndicalists were quick to note that the old assumptions about international proletarian solidarity had been too simplistic. And Olivetti argued in introducing the new series of *Pagine libere* in October of 1914: "To coordinate the social revolution with the fact of the existence of nations is the most serious problem for true and sincere revolutionaries at the present time."[7]

In fact, the evolution of events in Italy and elsewhere had led some of the syndicalists to begin this redefinition even before 1914. When Edmondo Rossoni, who had organized Italian workers in New York for several years before the war, spoke at the first congress of Fascist unions in June 1922, he recalled his own conversion to a kind of nationalism. The Italian workers in America, he maintained, had learned the hard way how much their own nationality affected their prospects—and not only because of the attitudes of the American bourgeoisie: "We have seen our workers exploited and held in low regard not only by the capitalists but also by the revolutionary *comrades* of other countries. We therefore know from experience how internationalism is nothing but fiction and hypocrisy."[8] It was especially the prewar Italian emigration experience that led the syndicalists to reject the facile categories of orthodox socialist internationalism. Italian immigrant workers often encountered ethnic discrimination by governments and employers and hostility on the part of their local proletarian comrades. De Ambris, who had worked as an organizer among the Italian workers in Brazil, bitterly denounced the treatment of Italians by business and government in Argentina in two influential *Pagine libere* articles, which were promptly reprinted in pamphlet form.[9] Paolo Orano described the hierarchy existing within the industrial proletariat in the United States. The native workers were clearly the superiors, while Italian immigrants were left to do the dirty work: "The immigrants from Italy know that the improvement of the salaries of the Italians in the United States is a chimera. There the sons of the Abruzzi and of Sicily empty the garbage and wash the dirty clothes even of the American workers. The Italians are the servants of their American 'comrades.'"[10] In a similar vein, when the Austrian socialists failed to protest their government's repression of Italian students in Vienna in 1908, Olivetti concluded that socialist internationalism was "a joke and a lie."[11]

In two perceptive books, *La guerra di Tripoli e l'opinione socialista* (1912) and *La conflagrazione europea e il socialismo* (1915), Arturo Labriola

attempted to discover the underlying causes of this failure of international proletarian solidarity. To begin with, he argued, socialists had to try to understand "the effects which belonging to a political unity predominant in the military and economic sphere have had on the psychology of the working classes. The way the American unions treat foreign workers; the ill-concealed disdain of German workers for Italian immigrants . . . the international dictatorship of German Social Democracy in the socialist congresses; all this demonstrates that the feelings of hegemony of the upper classes pass even into the working classes, and that it is not probable that their arrival in power would coincide with renunciation of their by-then customary hegemony."[12] Classical Marxism, Labriola explained, had anticipated an increasingly homogeneous international capitalist order based on free trade. The growing protectionism after 1879, however, had forged links between producers and consumers in each country which Marxism had not foreseen: "Capitalist society . . . makes the barriers between countries even higher—thanks to the import duties of every kind—and thus the proletariat very well did come to have a fatherland, so that in America the Italians—precisely because of their fatherland!—were declared undesirables, and negotiations between national states proved necessary to obtain legal protection for immigrant labor; otherwise those dear proletarians without a country would not have found even a dog that would have concerned himself with them."[13] As imperialism followed protectionism, workers in favored countries found that they too had a stake in the imperialistic successes of their ruling classes. Through imperialism, capitalism managed to expand its sphere of exploitation, producing a transitory community of interests between bourgeoisie and proletariat within a particular nation. It was this partnership that led the workers of favored countries to adopt a pose of superiority toward workers elsewhere—and that led socialists and workers to the support of national war in 1914. But Labriola concluded that the internal solidarity forged by imperialism was only temporary; class struggle would ultimately reemerge and determine future development.[14]

The other syndicalists by 1914 were likewise beginning to doubt that socialist internationalism could have any practical effect as long as some capitalist countries were more prosperous than others—and as long as protection and imperialism cemented the differences. Workers in a rich capitalist country were following their own economic self-interest, not merely sentimental patriotic ideals, when they supported their government's policies and enjoyed their share of their nation's prosperity. A disillusioned Agostino Lanzillo, writing during the interventionist debate, noted that faith in socialism had "definitively col-

lapsed" since it had now become clear that conflicting interests among the various national proletariats had wrecked international proletarian solidarity.[15]

As we have seen, Labriola concluded that a privileged proletariat, even in power after a revolution, would not be likely to renounce its customary hegemony and advantage. Given their skepticism about international proletarian solidarity, the syndicalists could not adopt a Leninist conception and assume that the revolution in Italy could be saved or helped along by socialist victories in more prosperous countries. If the Italians were to have a socialist society, they would have to build it themselves. But if they were to do so, they had to concern themselves directly not only with Italy's domestic problems, but also with her international situation, for problems on the international level could hinder Italian economic development, which was still the most obvious prerequisite for socialism. Italy seemed especially vulnerable to pressure by her wealthier, more powerful neighbors. Labriola had admitted in 1907 that the proletariat would have no choice but to support a war of national defense, and he viewed the Libyan War partly as an attempt by Italy to protect herself from geographical encirclement.[16] These geopolitical concerns for Italy's future were, he said, a necessary corollary to his socialism, since failure in the international sphere would doom Italy to economic decadence. Some of the syndicalists began to argue that if Italian economic development required imperialistic expansion in order to provide raw materials and population outlets, then an Italian socialist could even favor imperialism.[17] Not surprisingly, once the European war had broken out in 1914, the syndicalists began to focus on the benefits that might accrue to Italy, benefits necessary for the coming of socialism, from Italian participation in an Entente victory. For example, Filippo Corridoni anticipated that the war would not only bring about free trade, but also give Italy natural frontiers, thus enabling her to devote resources presently used for military defense to industrial development.[18]

Once the syndicalists began to see socialism as a national proposition, they found the war not only a defensive necessity, to ward off international reaction, but also a positive opportunity; the war could improve Italy's international position and even redeem the Italian nation, making it fit for socialism. Writing in *Il popolo d'Italia* in February 1915, Lanzillo portrayed the European conflict as "the war of redemption" for a nation that had emerged accidentally, without really deserving it, in the nineteenth century.[19] As his other writings during this period make clear, he was not choosing the nation and its redemption at the expense of the proletariat and socialist revolution.[20] But to Lanzillo and the other syndicalists, national redemption was an essential prerequisite for socialism, and it seemed that the war could be the essential preliminary revolution.

Once the orthodox line of argument brought them to this point, the syndicalists were bound to encounter their national populist underpinnings. But even some of the concerns originating on this populist level could be made compatible with socialist orthodoxy, since orthodoxy itself had to change to encompass the fact of nationality. During the years before the war, some European socialists had already posed the central questions about the relationship between nationality and socialism—for example, the Austrian Otto Bauer, who insisted that national and cultural attributes transcend class differences.[21] The war brought the issue sharply into focus. The syndicalists, too, had always sensed the importance of national differences and sometimes had emphasized that socialism could not—and need not—deny the nation, understood as the context of individual development, as a community of language, culture, and custom.[22] They had always viewed the socialist revolution as an antidote to particular Italian problems, as well as to the problems of capitalist society in general. There had been tensions in their doctrine, since they were concerned about Italy and proud to be Italian while, at the same time, they were seeking to build a socialist society by following an abstract internationalist model. But now the tensions seemed to disappear: objective, external phenomena had convinced the syndicalists that the orthodox socialist emphasis on international proletarian solidarity and deemphasis on nationality had been misplaced, so their underlying concern for Italy could come clearly to the surface. It seemed that socialism had to be a national proposition, that an Italian committed to socialism had to be committed to Italy. As the syndicalists adjusted to this perspective, it became easier for them to suggest solutions for Italian problems. Still, this newly explicit commitment to Italy was not the decisive step in their departure from traditional socialism. This generic form of nationalism did not undermine their belief in proletarian revolution.

Although economic differences among capitalist nations had undermined international proletarian solidarity, the syndicalists did not conclude that the pursuit of socialism had to be abandoned altogether. They had simply discovered that each proletariat had to create socialism in its own way, within its own national collective: "There are as many socialisms as there are countries."[23] Thus Agostino Lanzillo, writing early in 1915, found the war a prerequisite for a specifically Italian form of socialism, one that would embody and carry to fruition the best elements of the national tradition, but one that would, nevertheless, still be made by the proletariat using syndicalist methods—all according to the orthodox blueprint.[24]

The nationalism that was becoming increasingly important in syndicalist thinking by 1915 meant, above all, that the abstract "society" of traditional socialism could only be the nation, understood as the area in which the struggle was to be waged and solidarity achieved. With national economic differences and divergent proletarian interests no longer possible to ignore, it was necessary to recognize that the nation was the only collective possible, the concrete historical manifestation of society itself. As Panunzio put it in 1920: "Nationality is only an organic, concrete, *historical* form of sociality. The Nation is nothing but a *specific* society, an organic, concrete, historical form of society."[25] In socialist theory, class solidarity and class struggle are merely methods of achieving solidarity in a wider collective. If the nation is the only meaningful society, then the object of the revolution can only be to achieve national solidarity. Thus the syndicalists, while becoming nationalists in this special way, continued to emphasize class struggle and class solidarity—as the means to a revolution that would make national solidarity possible.

The syndicalists, then, could integrate some of their new perceptions and concerns into a reasonably orthodox framework: their nationalism, their desire for natural frontiers, their call for Italian participation in the war—none of it was logically incompatible with their continued belief in proletarian revolution against capitalism. The syndicalist revision began only as a change of emphasis, a shift in focus from long-term to short-term. But the new elements in their thinking that they first managed to integrate—albeit precariously—within an orthodox framework became ever more difficult to control as the long-term objective, proletarian revolution, receded into the distance.

The wartime situation really was surprising and confusing, of course, and the syndicalists were not the only ones who had trouble understanding what the war was to mean for the future. Sometimes they tried to make a virtue of the strangeness of things, claiming that the war would bury for good the forms and ideologies of the past and prepare the way for something radically new. Events were out of control, and the only prudent course was to evolve with them; one could hope to keep abreast only by acting, by getting involved in the epic presently transpiring. Whoever remained passive would be left behind as history accelerated and Europe entered a new era. Thus the syndicalists called on the proletariat to depart from the passive fatalism and determinism which they claimed lay at the root of the neutralism dominant in both the Socialist party and the unions.[26]

Even in De Ambris's initial interventionist speech, in August 1914, there were accents incompatible with the orthodoxy that he sought to emphasize. The war, he said, would be so vast an experience that it would transcend every present conceptual framework; it would be a kind of shot in the dark that, for better or worse, would shatter the present impasse.[27] Panunzio took the same tack in an article in Mussolini's *Avanti!* in September of 1914, arguing that socialism could emerge in Europe only as the consequence of a major war, the longer and more difficult the better.[28] The exhaustion and economic crisis that would result from such a war would affect winners and losers alike and thereby pave the way for revolution all over Europe.

In statements like these, the syndicalists were clearly falling into the kind of adventurism for which they have often been condemned. But they were not comfortable with this perspective on the war, nor with the sense of chaos and indeterminacy from which it sprang. When he wrote his article on the war for *Avanti!*, Panunzio was already involved in the intellectual reconstruction that would enable him to go beyond the imprecision in this piece and to spearhead a thoroughgoing redefinition of syndicalism.

The redefinition stemmed in part from the shifts in alliances that developed during the struggle for intervention itself. The vast majority of the organized workers failed to respond to the syndicalists' appeals and continued to oppose intervention, shunning what seemed a futile capitalist war. The syndicalists failed to convince even a majority within the USI. De Ambris and his interventionist colleagues made their pitch at a meeting of the confederation's general council in September 1914, but the majority opted for the neutralism of Armando Borghi, leader of the anarchists within the USI.[29] Schism followed as De Ambris led the interventionist minority out of the confederation. The split was complex, penetrating to the rank-and-file level and even dividing individual unions, but the result was a further loss in working class support for the syndicalists. For example, while Corridoni retained control of the Unione Sindacale Milanese, the organization lost its vitality and the majority of its members as a result of the dispute over intervention.[30] The war issue made final the divorce between the syndicalists and the bulk of the workers that had developed after 1905. From the proletarian perspective, the syndicalists' call for intervention was nothing short of treason.

If the syndicalists' arguments failed to convince Armando Borghi, they did gradually win over another leader of the Italian left, the dynamic young editor of *Avanti!*, Benito Mussolini.[31] Strongly influenced by the syndicalists, Mussolini ceased to advocate absolute neutrality in mid-October, then came out for intervention the next month. This breach of orthodoxy quickly produced Mussolini's departure from the Socialist party, for the vast majority of Socialists remained unmoved by his appeal for intervention. But Mussolini immediately became a

major leader in the interventionist movement, especially through his daily newspaper, *Il popolo d'Itália*. Panunzio praised Mussolini's conversion, and the collaboration between Mussolini and the syndicalists that some had explored since 1912 now became a reality.[32] Panunzio, Lanzillo, De Ambris, Rossoni, and other syndicalists contributed frequently to *Il popolo d'Italia*, which remained the focus of revolutionary interventionism throughout the war. The development of a revolutionary interventionist bloc raised interesting new possibilities, but the syndicalists were by no means becoming Mussolinians, losing their intellectual autonomy. As they sought to develop a more viable framework for their perceptions and goals, they retained the underlying values which had separated them from Mussolini all along.

Working through the interventionist Fasci, the syndicalists succeeded in stimulating support for intervention—in Milan, for example, where the charismatic Corridoni led impressive demonstrations, especially during the "Radiant Days" of May 1915.[33] Syndicalists were also influential in the struggle for intervention in Ferrara, where syndicalism had been relatively strong in the labor movement and where syndicalist ideas had already attracted the interest of students and others alienated from Giolittian Italy. Now the interventionist movement brought together syndicalists like Sergio Panunzio, who was teaching in Ferrara, and wider sectors of idealistic, nonproletarian young people like Italo Balbo. Panunzio headed the local Fascio, which De Ambris had come from Milan to help organize in January 1915. According to the influential fascist publicist Nello Quilici, the Fascio and the interventionist syndicalists attracted the most politically sensitive young people from the university and the liberal professions in Ferrara.[34] Now at last, the syndicalists were encountering a new constituency.

As a result of their interventionism, then, the syndicalists found themselves without many working-class allies, and their redefinition had to come to terms with the proletariat's disappointing response to their appeal for intervention. This response only furthered their disillusionment with the proletariat, for the war seemed precisely the kind of issue, transcending everyday economic concerns, which a maturing proletariat should be able to grasp. In one of his interventionist speeches, De Ambris questioned with disarming candor the fitness of the proletariat for socialism: "It is not only bread that we want, but also liberty; and a proletariat that satisfies itself by filling up its stomach, refusing every time we ask it to make sacrifices for conquests having an ideal character, would not be worthy of the destinies that syndicalism assigns to it."[35] Corridoni took the same tack: "The problem of the war is too much for the proletarian mind. The worker sees in the war only

massacre, misery, hunger—massacre, misery, and hunger that he, he himself, must suffer—and thus he is against the war. What does it matter to him if, within ten or twenty years, today's sacrifices yield incalculable benefits?"[36] The proletariat's neutralism seemed to indicate just how essential Italian intervention was, for participation in a war that was crucial for the future of socialism would be an invaluable educational experience for the workers.[37]

In stressing the educational value of the war, however, the syndicalists did not envision some sort of mystical purification through violence, nor were they glorifying, or even admitting, the primacy of force in human affairs. On the contrary, the war was a struggle against the rule of force and for an ideal, a more just order of things.[38] Through participation in the war, the workers would begin to understand the nature of this struggle and would come to grasp their own role in it. Not long before his death, Corridoni wrote from the front that he deeply hated war, that he was fighting this one only because he believed it would both end the era of wars in Europe and yield advantages to Italy which would speed her evolution toward syndicalist socialism.[39] In the same way, De Ambris, writing from the front in November 1915, sought to describe the brutalities he saw as realistically as possible, without romanticizing. In his view, war was by no means permanently healthy or inevitable for the human species; the present war was necessary "precisely to prevent this immense horror from recurring tomorrow."[40]

The war experience would help make the workers fit for socialist revolution in the long run, but for now the syndicalists themselves, as leading interventionists, were playing major roles in a struggle that apparently had revolutionary implications of a different sort. Speaking to a large interventionist rally in Milan in January 1915, Olivetti insisted that even without the workers, he and his fellow interventionists were creating something new, transcending ordinary politics and parties.[41] He linked the interventionist cause, with its emphasis on international justice and national liberation, to the great populist leaders of the Risorgimento—especially Giuseppe Mazzini. Speaking during that same January, De Ambris similarly invoked Mazzini as the prophet of the new revolutionary grouping. Interventionism seemed the catalyst for the leftist alliance De Ambris had advocated in the aftermath of Red Week, so he called on revolutionaries of all varieties to take advantage of the present situation to weaken the Italian state and to create the solidarity now lacking in Italian life. Mazzini had indicated the values that would inspire the preliminary revolution and bind together the new revolutionary force.[42]

Writing in *Il popolo d'Italia* in June 1915, Panunzio sought to give

this new movement more precise objectives, calling on revolutionaries to work together to replace the present parliamentary system, the source of all evils. Panunzio anticipated the destruction of parliament and the emergence of new political institutions all over Europe as a result of the war experience. At some points in this confused but significant article, Panunzio seems to have found the revolutionary meaning of the war precisely in these expected political consequences, but at other points, he apparently expected the war to pave the way for the proletarian revolution itself.[43] From the latter perspective, the war amounted to the self-destruction or death throes of the old bourgeois order, but the relationship between proletarian revolution and war as revolution remained unclear in Panunzio's thinking. It was one thing to anticipate the destruction of parliament as a result of the war; it was something else altogether to see the possibility of full-fledged proletarian revolution. In fact, however, Panunzio was on his way to a kind of antiparliamentary populism. With much rhetoric and abstraction, he declared the movement which had just succeeded in imposing intervention on parliament to have been the kind of supralegal constituent assembly which Italy had never had during the Risorgimento. He recalled the "ever fresh" Italian democratic publicists of 1848 and contrasted the true democracy of this extraparliamentary mass movement with parliamentary democracy. The defeat of parliament in the intervention dispute was the first step in the process of transforming Italy from a parliamentary monarchy into a "national monarchy" that would accompany the war.

As the war dragged on, such national populist accents increasingly came to the fore in syndicalist thinking. Thanks to the war, Ottavio Dinale wrote in December of 1916, the Italian people were outgrowing the old political system and the nation was finally coming to maturity, facing up to its defects, seizing control of its destinies.[44] Still, the parliament and the bureaucracy were not participating in this renewal. By implication, a vast political change would have to follow the war, but Dinale had nothing to say about what might happen or about the relationship of such an upheaval to proletarian revolution.

The syndicalists from 1914 to 1917 were being pulled in several directions at once. In discussing the war and its potential impact, their accents were sometimes orthodox, sometimes heterodox, and the nationalist, populist, Mazzinian, and antiparliamentary themes coexisted uneasily with the conventional socialist revolutionary themes. It was only later in the war, beginning in 1917, that the syndicalists began to weave these heterodox concerns together with elements of their original syndicalism, creating a new synthesis intended to respond to the needs of the immediate postwar period.

Georges Sorel confessed that he was simply unable to fathom why

the Italian syndicalists favored intervention and war. Italy, he felt, had little to gain and much to lose. Sorel even envisioned the possibility that the temporal power of the papacy might be restored; the Trentino was simply not worth such risks.[45] The Italian syndicalists had left the *maître* of the New School far behind, but where they were headed remained unclear.

It is widely assumed that the syndicalists, in embracing the nation and the war, essentially converged with the Italian Nationalists, thus laying the basis for the later collaboration of leftists and rightists within fascism.[46] Since the blueprint which the Nationalists offered fascism fully emerged only in light of Italy's postwar crisis, we are not yet ready to consider in detail the fundamental problem of the relationship between syndicalism and Nationalism. But Enrico Corradini was blocking out some of the more basic features of the Nationalist doctrine well before 1914, and there was some mutual interest between syndicalists and Nationalists as early as 1910. If we are to grasp what the syndicalists' commitment to war and the nation did and did not mean, and if we are to understand what their evolution toward fascism involved, it will be useful for us to consider here some of the initial Nationalist ideas—and what the syndicalists thought of them.

Despite some attempts at communication on both sides, the syndicalists remained hostile to the Nationalists, even well into the postwar period, for two basic reasons. First, even as nationalists, the syndicalists continued to call for proletarian revolution within the nation; it required more than a commitment to the nation and the war for them to advocate, like the Nationalists, proletarian solidarity with the other "producers" in Italian society. Second, the syndicalists in supporting the nation and the war were not accepting—and indeed they would never accept—the Nationalist vision of international relations as "an amoral struggle of isolated peoples for the breadbasket."[47]

Well before 1914, Enrico Corradini began trying to woo the syndicalists by emphasizing apparent areas of convergence between Nationalism and syndicalism. Speaking late in 1909, he praised syndicalism for its opposition to pacifism, humanitarianism, and parliamentary democracy, for its premium on will and force. Both Nationalism and syndicalism, said Corradini, were manifestations of a rebirth of stern moral values, and both stressed solidarity and elitism. He even admitted that Nationalism could learn from syndicalism: the Nationalists were willing to envision the nation in the future ordered like a giant syndicate, composed of a network of individual syndicates of producers. The aims of syndicalism could be contained within the nation, which was essentially "a corporation of classes, one big syndicate."[48]

In wooing the syndicalists, Corradini hoped not only to win further

support for Nationalism among the educated middle class, but also to establish a bridge to the working class. In a speech delivered in Milan and several other cities early in 1914, he pointed to the alleged convergence between Nationalism and syndicalism as evidence that the Nationalists were not antiproletarian.[49] But Corradini also sought to reach the workers more directly, through his interpretation of Italy's international position. By 1909 he had worked out the essentials of a counterideology designed to lure workers, syndicalists, and anyone else who would listen away from Marxist ideas of domestic class struggle and toward the Nationalist doctrine of domestic solidarity and international struggle.

The class struggle, said Corradini, was real enough, but it pitted not workers against capitalists within the nation, but poor proletarian nations against rich plutocratic nations on the international plane.[50] It was here, not on the limited national level, that the revolutionary struggle over economic distribution took place. "Have" and "have-not" nations competed for economic advantage in perpetual war—sometimes cold war, sometimes hot war. Since some capitalist countries were richer than others, and since the workers of a rich country did share in their nation's wealth, international proletarian solidarity was a sham, a doctrine which served the plutocratic nations by helping to keep proletarian nations like Italy divided along class lines. Much like the syndicalists, Corradini emphasized that everywhere Italian emigrants went, they suffered discrimination in favor of native workers—in France, for example, where the pension system treated French and foreign workers unequally.[51] Thus the working class would be well advised to support the Nationalists in their quest for colonies to provide the necessary outlets for surplus Italian labor. But above all, Corradini argued, the workers should wake up to the fact that it made a real economic difference for an individual to be born in a prosperous country like Great Britain, no matter what class he belonged to. And in a poor country like Italy, the proletariat could significantly improve its lot not through domestic class struggle against the bourgeoisie, but through collaboration with the other classes. Italy's overall poverty meant that there was little margin for shifts in distribution; improvement could come only from increased production. And since the economic prospects of all Italians depended on the international well-being of their proletarian nation, they should work together to ensure success on the crucial international level.

Corradini's overtures to the syndicalists appeared not only in Nationalist publications, but also in Paolo Orano's review *La lupa* in 1910.[52] It was precisely then that classical revolutionary syndicalism was starting to break down, and it is tempting to see Corradini's

appearance in *La lupa* as an indication that new alignments were already developing. Corradini's overtures did not go unheeded: communication between the Nationalists and some of the syndicalists did develop between 1910 and 1915. But the significance of these flirtations has been much overplayed; the two movements did not converge, as the ongoing syndicalist hostility to the Nationalists makes clear. Orano, responding to Corradini's *La lupa* article of 1910, agreed that there were interesting similarities between Nationalism and syndicalism, but he stressed the gulf that remained between them, especially because of the Nationalist conception of the role of war.[53] And Arturo Labriola, in his book supporting the Libyan War, emphasized that Nationalism, with its call for national solidarity, was a fraud, merely a smokescreen for bourgeois interests.[54]

Nationalism in general need not involve a commitment to solidarity within—and thus unqualified support for—the nation as constituted at some particular time. For the syndicalists, national solidarity was not merely a necessity to be accepted, but an ideal to be created. It could be created, they continued to argue, only by eradicating the parasitic element within the present nation—through socialist revolution. Thus class solidarity remained essential within the present nation, even if only as a means to make genuine national solidarity possible. Rossoni's widely repeated motto for *L'Italia nostra*, the organ of the syndicalist labor movement in 1918, effectively summarized this national-revolutionary position: "La Patria non si nega, si conquista"—"The Fatherland is not to be denied, but won."

Even as the war dragged on, even after it was over, the syndicalists contended repeatedly that their nationalism did not diminish their desire for revolution within Italy. A real nationalist had to be a revolutionary: to accept class collaboration in the present order, based on exploitation and parasitism, would be treason not only against syndicalism, but also against the nation. Thus Orano, writing in 1919, called on Italian workers to conquer a fatherland for themselves—and to redeem the Italian nation in the process.[55]

The Italian Nationalist movement seemed to the syndicalists to represent the elements in Italian society—especially the protectionist plutocracy—that had to be overcome if meaningful national solidarity was to be possible. For Panunzio, writing in July of 1917, Italian Nationalism was "the theory for the rescue of the bourgeois economy in decadence."[56] Olivetti's review *La patria del popolo* attacked Nationalism in similar terms late in 1922: "Since the majority of Italians is composed of workers and producers . . . a doctrine which claims to identify the concept of Fatherland with the defense of the parasitical classes and interests in the nation cannot really be a national doctrine."[57] The revolution the syndicalists proposed, continued Olivetti's publication,

was intended to eliminate precisely the parasitical classes represented by Nationalism.

We have seen that the syndicalists did not argue consistently for orthodox proletarian revolution after their turn to war and the nation. But their growing interest in national political change did not make them allies of the Nationalists. Genuine nationalism, the syndicalists insisted, had to be popular and was tantamount to a kind of populism abhorrent to the elitist Nationalists.[58] While criticizing parliamentary democracy in April of 1918, Panunzio explicitly sought to defend the substance of the democratic ideal against the attacks of "those abstract 'doctrinaires' who are our 'Nationalists.'" He warned that those who resisted institutional change to make democracy more meaningful were playing into the Nationalists' hands; indeed, they were in danger "of provoking certain . . . baneful *revivals*. The monarchical-clerical-military-nationalist legitimism of Charles Maurras in France is indicative."[59]

The Nationalists' conception of international relations conforms to prevailing conceptions of the fascist worldview; history was a perpetual, quasi-Darwinian struggle among nations, with each nation understood as a distinct biological organism. In his "Manifesto" introducing the new Nationalist review *Politica* in December of 1918, Alfredo Rocco portrayed struggle both as the fundamental law of life for societies and as the method whereby the natural evolution of peoples takes place. Without such struggle, humanity would only sink into dissolution and decadence. To be strong was the first duty of any state "because," as Rocco put it with his customary bluntness, "the opposition which democratic ideology has seen fit to create between justice and power does not exist."[60]

The value—and inevitability—of struggle, imperialism, and war were always central themes in Nationalist thinking. Enrico Corradini and his colleagues publicized these notions as they worked to drum up support for Italy's imperialist war with Turkey over Libya in 1911 and 1912. Corradini stressed a nation's right to take whatever it could get and its duty to conquer the bases of its own prosperity. Turkey and Libya, of course, were hardly plutocratic nations, but the Nationalist doctrine had no room for international solidarity among proletarian nations. Plausibly enough, Corradini pointed out that there was nothing rational or just about the present distribution of the earth's surface among nations or population groups: "No people has an absolute, innate right to a particular territory; rather, all peoples have only a relative right, an historical right, to the territory which they occupy." This right lasts only "as long as a people is a vital and active nation."[61] In the geographical area known as Libya, the Berbers had been overrun

by the Arabs centuries ago, and the Arabs had been overrun by the Turks a few centuries later. Italy could now claim title to the same territory by the same never-ending method of conquest from peoples grown too decadent to defend that territory. Of course, some countries, their perspectives skewed by self-interest, would fail to grasp Corradini's world-historical logic and would point an accusing finger at dynamic Italy, while mouthing platitudes about peace and international law. Pacifism and humanitarianism and the rule of law were fine ideals for countries that had already conquered empires and that were free of the shame of emigration. Such conservative ideals simply served to legitimize the status quo, thus enabling the rich countries to preserve a favorable situation without having to fight.[62] Corradini might have returned to his transposed Marxist framework at this point: the humanitarian and pacifist ideals characteristic of the plutocratic nations constituted a classic example of ideology.

When the World War broke out, the Nationalists promptly advocated Italian intervention, and they were not fussy about their choice of enemies. Ultimately, the Nationalists felt, Italy had to focus on the whole Mediterranean and challenge France and Great Britain, but for now, while she was still in the early stages of her national revival, she could concentrate on the Adriatic and the Balkans and take on Austria-Hungary. There would be plenty of time for the wider struggle later on. Either way, the war, for the Nationalists, was simply a matter of imperial expansion for Italy. They would have none of the humanitarian ideals which many leftist interventionists espoused. Francesco Coppola, writing in October 1914, portrayed the war as starkly as possible, as a conflict "of peoples and races for existence, for wealth, for power and superiority"; the present war was a national-imperial struggle even for Great Britain and France, whatever arguments they used to justify themselves.[63]

Coppola's thinking after the war followed the same lines. By means of the war, history finally had reimposed its eternal laws on the European peoples, after the reign of false internationalistic and democratic ideologies during the nineteenth century: "Constrained by the truth of war, the nations once again came to feel themselves what they are in fact: armies; armies in the universal struggle for selection and improvement."[64] Alfredo Rocco's accents were similar. The war, he insisted, had been the product of conflicting imperialisms, pitting aggressive, unsatisfied nations like Italy and Germany against the old, saturated empires, which had sought to head off the war through pacifistic ideologies, but which finally found themselves dragged into it nevertheless. The anomalous lineup of the conflicting sides, with Italy fighting alongside Britain and France against Germany, was merely

one indication that this war could not have been definitive, despite all the rhetorical gloss about a war to end all wars. The Great War had been only "a grandiose and terrible episode—by no means novel, by no means final—in the eternal struggle of peoples for existence and dominion."[65] A new era of imperial struggle would follow, and the Nationalists' postwar program was intended to enable Italy to rise to the challenge.

Despite their nationalism and interventionism, the syndicalists never viewed history and international affairs from the perspective we have just considered. Indeed, their thinking differed from that of the Nationalists in highly symptomatic ways. Even as fascists, the syndicalists continued to believe in internationalism and in the possibility of greater justice among nations. Panunzio, writing early in 1918 and still calling himself a socialist, denied that national exclusiveness and mutual hostility followed from the fact of national cultural differences. Internationalism remained possible and desirable, but to be viable it had to involve the harmonious coexistence of different national cultures in some sort of federal system, one admitting the value of national differences. In other words, nationalism for the syndicalists was the necessary substratum for a rational, authentic internationalism, which could only be based on freely contracting nations.[66]

In the prewar international order, different nations and even different proletariats had sufficient interests in conflict to make genuine international solidarity—whether it involved classes or whole nations—difficult to attain. But harmony among nations, though not yet achieved in fact, remained for the syndicalists an ethical imperative, an ideal to be sought. Thus they bitterly criticized the Nationalists for their espousal of perpetual international struggle. Even in the aftermath of the Libyan War, which he had so vigorously supported, Arturo Labriola found the Italian Nationalists "drunk with militaristic rhetoric" and warned that if all nations were to follow their prescriptions, perpetual war and the end of civilization would inevitably result.[67] During the European war, De Ambris wrote a number of articles for *Il popolo d'Italia* in an explicit attempt to distinguish the syndicalists' conception of the war from that of the Nationalists, which some neutralists were citing to discredit intervention and the war in general.[68] He condemned Nationalism for its gloomy vision of perpetual war and insisted that the syndicalists, in contrast, understood the present war as a means to make possible a greater degree of peace and harmony among nations. De Ambris envisioned a new federal organization of the nations of Europe and ultimately the world, one capable of dealing peacefully with such sources of conflict as international trade and access to colonies and the seas. Panunzio's emphasis was similar throughout the war: the

irrationalities which produced the war could only be overcome through the war itself, which would make possible a dialectical resolution, a new form of international organization, diminishing the chances of future wars.[69]

Panunzio developed these ideas most fully early in 1916, in a lecture at the University of Bologna that was published in book form the next year. This statement, entitled *Il concetto della guerra giusta* [The concept of the just war], is one of the central documents in the syndicalist transition to fascism and makes strikingly clear the deep chasm between the syndicalist and the Nationalist conceptions of history. Panunzio affirmed precisely what the Nationalists denied: the reality of the category of justice and the ability of human beings, acting in history, to order their affairs in a more just way.[70] Belief in the possibility of justice, however, did not mean for Panunzio pacifism and an acceptance of the status quo, for the present order, despite its legalistic underpinnings, was still riddled with injustices. Thus just wars were possible, and these were not merely defensive wars, preserving the status quo, but "offensive" wars, imposing a new, more just order of things. When, as at present, there was a chance for mankind to move a step closer to justice, pacifism and the present international framework could legitimately be cast aside. Nations and classes profiting from the present imperfect system could be expected to resist, calling for peace, equilibrium, and respect for the existing system of laws.[71]

We have seen that Corradini and the Nationalists portrayed doctrines of peace and international law in similar terms, as "ideologies," but the psychological mainsprings of Panunzio's position were different. For the Nationalists, wars were amoral tests of power that would continue throughout history. There could be no justice, no progression toward justice as a transcendent absolute. For Panunzio, on the other hand, wars could be genuine revolutions which "bring about the rectification of juridical experience in light of the Idea and the preparation of the final triumph of Justice, which is the implicit end of history, without which human history would be blind, like the statue of Polyphemus."[72] Panunzio obviously believed that sometimes violence, as in a war, could be creative, in the sense of carrying mankind closer to justice. But he warned explicitly that he did not celebrate war and violence for their own sake, and he heaped scorn on the "litterateurs and false poets" who did.[73] From Panunzio's perspective, then, a war could be only a blind and useless slaughter; everything depended on the quality of the peace, the new order, that developed from it.[74]

In his contributions to *Il popolo d'Italia*, Panunzio sought to establish what a just outcome of the present war would involve. The new order would include free trade, freedom of the seas, and a more equitable

sharing of colonial space, especially with the anticipated dissolution of the Ottoman empire. Like other socialists from Marx to Bernstein, Panunzio said that socialism could not oppose colonial enterprises which spread civilization to backward areas and made underutilized resources available to those who could develop them. The colonial system would obviously survive the war, and it was essential that the existing disproportions in colonial holdings be overcome: "everyone ought to participate in them equitably—each state in proportion to its needs and to its forces of labor."[75] Panunzio wanted Italy to get a larger share, but this did not lead him to espouse aggressiveness and international hostility. In his important *Introduzione alla società delle nazioni*, which grew out of a lecture given at the University of Bologna in December 1918, he suggested that colonial areas, when they were unable to become viable nations in their own right, should belong collectively to the new League of Nations and not remain or become the property of individual states.[76]

Panunzio had no illusions that the Great War would produce absolute justice; it was not possible to eliminate all injustices—and thus all the roots of future wars—from within the present framework.[77] But a new era of peaceful adjustment could follow from the war, and as the war was ending, he sought to propose ways of organizing a viable society of nations. His major book on the subject won the prize of a Milanese group seeking to promote international organization after the war.[78] Panunzio's proposals offer further evidence of the commitment to international understanding and justice which made his position so different from the Nationalism of Corradini and Rocco. He called on each nation, for example, to develop more cosmopolitan varieties of education in order to foster the supranational form of sociality necessary for a new kind of international order.[79] It was essential to free education from the cultural chauvinism which Panunzio considered an even more serious source of international hostility than economic rivalry. And more generally, he called for increased cultural contact to broaden human sensibilities and thereby help to develop psychological underpinnings for a new internationalism. Just as individuals, over the centuries, had been educated to understand the state and the law on the domestic level, they could be educated gradually to accept supranational forms. Once again, Panunzio found no incompatibility between nationalism, properly understood, and internationalism; the right kind of national education, free of nationalist prejudice, could help develop the political awareness which was essential for the new international order.

Humanitarian education and cultural interchange were essential to establish lasting foundations, but Panunzio also proposed a network

of international institutions with considerable power. Together constituting the new "League of Nations," these entities would provide the international coordination so lacking before. To be effective, they would have to develop their own formal patterns of obligations and guarantees. Panunzio envisioned, for example, an international body to coordinate production and economic exchange and another to regulate armaments and military inventions. Through this network of specialized international organizations, mankind would finally begin to extend the sphere of law to the international level.[80] Since he was committed to expanding international collaboration after the war, it is hardly surprising that Panunzio judged the economics of Nationalism, with its emphasis on imperialism, absurd and self-defeating.[81]

Although Panunzio considered these matters more systematically than his colleagues, the other syndicalists portrayed the war, international affairs, and their own nationalism in essentially the same terms.[82] They supported the league of nations concept, advocating a new internationalism based on free and equal nations; they portrayed the war as the instrument of greater justice in international affairs, repudiating the Nationalist conception of the war and the postwar world. De Ambris worried about the dimensions of Italy's demographic and economic problems, but he specifically rejected the Nationalist solution, because it involved the imperialism, protectionism, and periodic war which he sought to avoid.[83]

The syndicalists' proposals for a new international order were idealistic, needless to say, and they themselves were quick to point out that the new League of Nations could turn out to be a sham. Panunzio warned that some conceptions of the league manifested "the spirit of conservative reaction of the old Holy Alliance of the three Empires," and disillusionment among the syndicalists with the results of the war was not long in coming.[84] Addressing a labor congress in September 1921, De Ambris complained that the war had not brought forth the new era of international justice that he had expected, but only new forms of imperialist conflict.[85] When the syndicalists viewed the international situation in terms of socialist concerns, the flaws in international proletarian solidarity stood out more sharply than ever. De Ambris, Olivetti, and Panunzio cited the advantages which English and American workers enjoyed thanks to imperialistic exploitation.[86] Organized labor in America was currently supporting the exclusion of Italian immigrants in order to keep its own wages up. Privileged proletariats sought to preserve their positions, and it seemed that the only recourse of their less fortunate counterparts, at least for now, was to help improve the international positions of their respective nations.

By 1921 the syndicalists were beginning to adopt a more aggressive

form of nationalism as a short-term expedient, while continuing to insist on the desirability and possibility of international justice in the long term. Sometimes they even portrayed Italy in Corradinian terms as a "proletarian nation"; the war had not substantially changed the basis of international relations, and Italy had to look out for her own interests, some of which resulted from her "proletarian" status in a world dominated by "plutocratic" nations.[87] Italy's gloomy economic prospects—her overpopulation and her lack of raw materials and capital—worried them considerably. However, despite some rhetoric about proletarian nations in his speech of September 1921, De Ambris could not accept the Nationalist vision of ongoing struggle and imperialism. He called instead for free trade and for a system of equal access to colonies, in order to provide each nation with the opportunity to solve its problems of raw materials and living space without resort to war. While international struggle between "have" and "have-not" nations was permanent for Corradini, De Ambris advocated solidarity among proletarian nations—and struggle with plutocratic nations—in order to create the equal economic opportunity which could provide the only basis for meaningful international harmony.[88] Whatever the feasibility of such proposals, they exemplify the continuing difference between the syndicalist and Nationalist conceptions of international relations.

Still, syndicalist disillusionment with the outcome of the war by 1921 helped make possible a measure of short-term collaboration between syndicalists and Nationalists within fascism later on. Given the present international context, it seemed, Italy would have to consider imperialism. But even those syndicalists who ultimately turned to fascism continued to believe that a more harmonious international order was possible. A. O. Olivetti, for example, posed the Italian demographic problem as a test for the international community, a challenge to work out a just and peaceful solution to a complex international problem. Writing in *Il popolo d'Italia* in 1924, he pointed to France's possession of Tunisia as an example of international disequilibrium, given the radically different demographic situations of France and Italy. A disequilibrium of this sort, he warned, could not last indefinitely, but it remained unclear whether the resolution would take the form of contractual justice or imperial conquest. Olivetti stressed his preference for the former, but the matter depended, he said, "almost exclusively on the good will of the other nations. The problem of our emigration must promptly be placed before the League of Nations as an international problem the solution to which cannot be put off. It will be the test of fire for this organization in the process of formation."[89] Under the auspices of the league, for example, Italians should be able to emigrate collectively, with the Italian state able to negotiate collective

contracts for them and to help them preserve their Italian identity abroad. If fair and cooperative solutions could not be worked out, Olivetti insisted that Italy could legitimately turn to imperialism.

As the years went by, Olivetti grew more bitter, complaining that the Great War had not proven the catalyst for the emergence of a more just international order. As evidence, he cited the barriers which other nations were erecting against Italian immigration, thereby exacerbating Italy's demographic problems.[90] By the late 1920s, Olivetti was boasting that Italy, thanks to fascism, was sufficiently disciplined and unified for the imperialist solutions that increasingly seemed necessary.[91] He even began to lump Italy with Germany and Japan. But writing in 1931, only a few months before his death, Olivetti affirmed once again his preference for nonmilitary solutions and his belief in the possibility of international cooperation and justice. He insisted that Italy, in confronting her economic problems, wanted "to forget the teaching of history, according to which a dynamic people which finds it impossible to live its life necessarily attacks the wealth of someone else," and he expressed the hope of Italians that the selfishness of others "will not force us to remember that lesson."[92]

A few years later, at the time of Italy's war with Ethiopia, Panunzio bitterly lamented the frustration of all the postwar aspirations for a new kind of international order. The League of Nations had proven a "flawed masterpiece" serving to preserve an unjust status quo in the interests of the "have" nations, who were seeking to cement their hold on colonies they had acquired through force before. But Panunzio had not given up. He recalled his own insistence, as the Great War was ending, that a viable international order would have to embrace the socioeconomic sphere and called again for a supranational corporativism, with international councils to coordinate socioeconomic relationships. Despite the disillusionment and bitterness, despite the Ethiopian War, Panunzio did not advocate autarky and national exclusiveness; the way out was more international coordination, not less: "Egotism among nations is a material and moral absurdity; nations . . . cannot live closed and isolated but must interact and cooperate."[93]

Obviously then, some of the syndicalists' statements as fascists did help to rally support for the kind of aggressive foreign policy that the Nationalists had always wanted, but not because the syndicalists had adopted the Nationalist vision of international relations and human history. Nor did this measure of convergence stem from the syndicalists' belief in war and the nation beginning in 1914 or before. It was not the syndicalists' desire for war, but their disillusionment with the peace, that helped to make possible a degree of short-term collaboration with the Nationalists. But foreign policy was never primary for the syndical-

ists in any case. Even after they began to recognize the importance of the nation's position in the world, their central objective remained domestic change.

Domestic changes seemed to be necessary everywhere if Europe was to have an era of peace and justice in the aftermath of the Great War. While the Nationalists blamed popular government for being short-sighted and pacific, Panunzio called for changes to make the European governments more popular, as the way to overcome militarism and chauvinistic nationalism.[94] Even the parliamentary governments had to be transformed to enable the people genuinely to control foreign policy. So while the Nationalists wanted government to become less popular in order to enhance the nation's capacity to wage war, the syndicalists wanted government to become more popular in order to enhance the prospects for justice and peace.

6 / *The Postwar Crisis and the Nationalist Response*

The war lasted longer, and proved a more grueling test, than its advocates had anticipated in 1914–15. It had not been the buoyant interventionists who had sensed what was coming, but pessimistic neutralists like Giolitti and Giustino Fortunato, who had opposed intervention partly because they feared that Italy could not handle the challenge of a long war. Italy's disastrous defeat by Austria-Hungary at Caporetto in October 1917 seemed to confirm such gloomy presentiments, but this proved to be the nadir of her war experience—and a major turning point in modern Italian history. Although the defeat resulted from new Austro-Hungarian military tactics, contemporaries—both interventionists and neutralists—immediately became preoccupied with moral sources, since they viewed the defeat, like the whole wartime challenge, in terms of the long-standing problems of Italian national integration. And of course even if the defeat itself was comprehensible in strictly military terms, it still had to be asked whether this poorly integrated nation could hold together and recover.[1] Perhaps the neutralists had been right to doubt Italy's resiliency as a nation. Panunzio and Lanzillo were among those who were to participate in a project to rewrite Italian history in the light of Caporetto.[2] Now Italy was to have her examination of conscience.

The immediate situation looked brighter a month later when the philosopher Giovanni Gentile reflected on what this examination of conscience had meant for Italians. In discussing the terrifying self-doubts that he and his countrymen had felt just a few weeks before, he gave voice to all the crisis of national self-image that was—and would long remain—inextricably bound up with the Italian experience of World War I: "In its crudest, yet simplest and truest form, it was the