

vides a new quarry for such considerations. One awaits the appearance of the next master mason to set in order these building blocks from the past to shape a better future. **WV**

THE YOUNG MUSSOLINI AND THE INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF FASCISM

by A. James Gregor

(University of California Press,
xii + 270 pp.; \$16.50)

ITALIAN FASCISM AND DEVELOPMENTAL DICTATORSHIP

by A. James Gregor

(Princeton University Press; xiv + 427
pp.; \$27.50/9.75)

Anthony James Joes

From his post at the University of California, A. James Gregor has been waging a protracted campaign to change the way in which we think about fascism. To appreciate the magnitude, as well as the value, of the task Gregor has taken on, one should recall the state of Fascist studies in the middle and late 1960s. Serious works on fascism had been produced by scholars such as Paul Einzig, Herman Finer, and William Welk during the 1930s. But for two decades after the end of the Second World War, American images of fascism, even in the academy, were redolent of wartime propaganda and the crudest sort of class-war monism. Political convenience allowed "Fascist" to be used synonymously with "Nazi"; professional convenience allowed primary sources to be neglected, with predictable results. Any academician would have been hooted out of his academy had he offered such analyses of Russian communism as: "The Bolsheviks were pawns in a German plot to dominate the world" or "Stalin was a Georgian bankrobber who imposed himself on a servile and masochistic people." Yet analogous "explanations" of Mussolini and fascism had become all too common among U.S. historians and political scientists. Thus one of the most complex and important political movements in modern history was caricatured into incomprehensibility.

Determined to change all that, and armed with a profound knowledge of primary source materials on fascism,

Gregor has produced a series of books which by themselves constitute a graduate education in the theory and practice of fascism. Among these works, *The Ideology of Fascism* (1969) exposed the deep roots of fascist thought in European sociology and philosophy of the nineteenth century; *The Fascist Persuasion in Radical Politics* (1974) analyzed the pre-1914 crisis of Marxist thought from which fascism eventually emerged and established the family resemblance among Italian fascism, Maoism, and Castroism.

Gregor has just produced two new works. *The Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism* shows how Mussolini, between 1909 and 1922, combined elements of Marxism, syndicalism, and nationalism into a coherent and attractive doctrine. *Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship* establishes the connection between that doctrine and Fascist policies between the March on Rome and the Second World War.

By 1914, Mussolini was Italian socialism's most prominent personality. He was well acquainted with the works of Marx and Engels, writing numerous articles on them as editor of the party's national newspaper. *The Young Mussolini* traces the growing influence on Mussolini and other Socialists of the "syndicalists," a little-known but fascinating group of Marxist heretics, the most prominent of whom was Georges Sorel. Finding much of classical Marxism irrelevant to the preindustrial Italy in which they lived, the syndicalists also distrusted the official Socialist party, with its largely bourgeois leadership and its tendency to play parliamentary politics while waiting comfortably for "inexorable economic laws" to bring revolution. Some syndicalists evolved a new theory of revolution emphasizing the mobilization of the masses by a dedicated élite who would employ morally compelling symbols and myths. Some of these syndicalist revolutionaries, called "national" syndicalists, went further. The proletarian revolution could not occur in Italy until the bourgeoisie completed its task of industrialization, but industrialization was stalled because Italy was starved of natural resources. Hence, the proletarian revolution required that Italy acquire these resources through a colonial empire. The Italian proletariat, in a word, could expect no real improvement in its lot so long as most of Italy remained poor and

powerless. National syndicalists therefore supported Italy's war of aggression against Turkey in 1911 (as Engels had cheered Bismarck's Prussia against France in 1870 and upheld the British raj in India).

Mussolini felt increasingly attracted to these ideas. Like Lenin, he had long before given up his faith in the "spontaneous revolutionary uprising of the masses," and his experience as a Socialist organizer in the Austrian-ruled Trentino had kindled sparks of nationalism within him. Confronted by the war of 1914, Mussolini tried to move his Socialist party away from its sterile non-policy of neutralism to his own vision of the struggle as a people's war that would drive the apathetic masses into the national mainstream and help complete Italy's industrial revolution. Mussolini failed to convince the majority of his Socialist comrades and, indeed, was expelled from the party. Forced to construct his own political organization, building on syndicalist insights, Mussolini by the end of 1917 "had begun to articulate the first coherent, mass-mobilizing, nationalist and developmental ideology of the twentieth century." Thus, fascism—a heresy of Marxism by way of national syndicalism—went on to triumph over both orthodox socialism and political Catholicism after 1918 because the Fascists had preempted the themes of nationalism and modernization.

The first part of *Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship* presents a summary of the main ideas found in *The Young Mussolini*; in the rest of the book Gregor is concerned with the policies of the Fascist regime after 1922. Roberto Michels, a leading national syndicalist thinker (whose *Political Parties* has become a political science classic in the United States), was officially charged with the elaboration and propagation of Fascist ideology. Gregor establishes—in interesting chapters on Fascist economic, labor, and social policies—the influence of syndicalist thought on Fascist action.

Another major theme of the book is the similarity between major policies of fascism and Stalinism. Soon after seizing power, the Bolsheviks discovered (like Italian syndicalists before them) that the writings of Marx had little to guide a leadership bent on the rapid modernization of a peasant society. Thus, in its regimentation of labor, in its appeals to nationalism, and in its

"orchestration of consensus," Stalinist praxis more and more resembled that of Italian fascism, a phenomenon often pointed out by Trotsky. (One area of remarkable dissimilarity. Literally millions of Russians were directly killed by Stalinist repression; political executions while Mussolini was prime minister numbered about twenty-five.)

Gregor reviews the impressive Fascist achievements in industrialization. Even where a policy was largely unsuccessful, as in the effort to hold down urban gigantism and unemployment through improvements in rural living standards, the major concepts were sound. Finally, Gregor makes it clear that the latest revolutionary theories of our time, in which people's revolutions can be made by men of determination in any setting and without industry and proletariat, had been developed by syndicalist thinkers more than sixty years ago.

To summarize, Gregor has slain the conventional wisdom by demonstrating that fascism possessed a coherent ideology which was much more relevant to underdeveloped societies than is Marxism, that this ideology determined policy to a substantial degree, and that Fascist ideology and practice have found imitators in the (theoretically) least likely places. Readers interested in an authoritative treatment of some of the most fundamental political questions of our century will be well rewarded by a careful study of these books. [VVV]

ABORTING AMERICA
by Bernard N. Nathanson, M.D.,
with Richard N. Ostling
(Doubleday, 320 pp., \$10.00)

A PRIVATE CHOICE
by John T. Noonan, Jr.
(The Free Press, 244 pp., \$11.95)

Robin W. Lovin

Few public issues are as frustrating as the debate over abortion. After a decade of proclamations, marches, legislation, litigation, and slogans we seem no closer to a public consensus on abortion policy than we were at the beginning. Times change, the law changes, the public mood shifts left and right, but the principals in this controversy continue to glare at one another from the

same fixed positions, armed with the same arguments and shouting the same slogans.

In this atmosphere two books by advocates with well-known positions in the debate might seem to offer little hope for progress. In fact, however, Bernard Nathanson's *Aborting America* and John T. Noonan's *A Private Choice* illuminate the key problem in the abortion debate. Though both writers stand opposed to current abortion policy, it is Noonan who treats it as a public issue

and points the way to a public resolution. Nathanson, by contrast, appeals to scientific evidence with a finality that cuts off public inquiry and leaves us waiting for a definitive word from the laboratory, a word that never comes.

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