

Italy, the School along with every other aspect of national life, came under its influence. The influence was extended to the School's principles, teaching, curriculum, organisation, staffing and pupils. According to the general principles of Fascism everything and everyone existed only to serve the aims of the State. The School



therefore became a tool of Fascism and was called The Fascist School.

The transformation took place through sundry reforms—the Gentile and Bottai Reforms, the Carta della Scuola (School Charter), and many laws and regulations. The School then ceased to be an institution for the spreading of pure knowledge. It became a political instrument. This was shown when teachers and leading pupils wore badges and often the Black Shirt uniform.

These were concrete indications that teachers were compelled to join the Fascist Party and had to act and speak in school according to party directives. Fascist culture was made an important subject in the altered curriculum. School books, especially on history, were given a Fascist twist. Parades of a paramilitary nature became a feature of school life.

All pupils were enlisted in the Fascist Organisation, first called Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB),

and then Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (GIL), or Italian Youth of the Lictory. This was the major educational instrument, to which the School was linked and to some extent subdued.

The GIL had one branch for boys, another for girls. Children were enlisted at a tender age. Some parents inscribed their children while still babes-in-arms. Until attaining the age of six the boys were known as Figli della Lupa (Sons of the Wolf) and from six to 11 as Balilla, after a Genoese boy who started a liberation movement there. At 12 they became Avanguardisti, and at 13, Giovani Fascisti (Young Fascists). Finally they entered the Fascist Party. The girls passed through similar stages as Figlia della Lupa, Piccola Italiana, Giovani Italiana, Giovani Fascista.

Education became neither more nor less than the path of Fascism. This was perfectly logical. Fascism was proclaimed the highest ideal, and education could have no better task than leading youth to it.

The GIL had a threefold function—military, sporting and educational. Boys started military training at a very early age. Once



they became young Fascists they had to do pre-military service. Dodging service entailed severe penalties. This was in accordance with the Fascist principle that education must be military as well as intellectual. (*Libro e Moschetto—Fascista perfetto. Book and gun—a perfect Fascist.*)