

were appointed to advise him, and he was directed that in any grave matters he must "invite" the more experienced citizens to his council. These two innovations, making the first inroads on the Doge's absolute power, paved the way for the later development of the Coronation Oath and the Board of Inquisitors into the action of a deceased Doge. The two Councillors evolved into a full Ducal Council. The "invited" (*pregadi*) became the Senate (or meeting of the *Pregadi*) a regularly constituted body with permanent members. These and other changes ultimately resulted in the Doge becoming a mere figurehead, who in the last resort was bound to take his ministers' advice.

These changes were away from the pure doctrine of democracy, but democracy never did work very well until the invention of representative government, an idea the Italians never grasped. They were certainly changes in the direction of a stronger and more stable policy and as such ensured that Venice would be able to seize the opportunities that were to be hers.

Under the new dispensation the Venetians continued to expand their trade. In 1081, responding to the Greek Emperor's appeal for assistance against Robert Guiscard, the Norman adventurer who now held most of the South of Italy, they defeated that doughty Northerner, and after a disastrous failure in 1084, finally crushed him in the following year. This greatly increased their prestige, and the Emperor rewarded them with trading privileges and tax exemptions. At this time, too, was founded the Venetian quarter in Constantinople itself, a peaceful invasion which led up to the later capture of the whole city.

Carefully calculated assistance in the Crusades drew the islanders further and further afield and resulted in Venetian quarters being established in many towns of the Levant, such as

Tyre and Sidon. These colonies were useful in keeping the trade in purely Venetian hands, but this exclusiveness and the people's growing wealth raised much jealousy and, in 1171, led to an incident which indirectly enabled the aristocrats to achieve their second purpose, the disfranchisement of the masses. In that year the Greek Emperor, urged by the Genoese, who had no love for their too-successful rivals, arrested the Venetians in Constantinople and confiscated their goods. Rage at this news swept the people of Venice and they insisted on war. A great expedition sailed and it is interesting to note that to meet the cost a national bank was formed, a forced loan of 1 per cent. on all property was declared, and bonds were issued at 4 per cent. to cover the amount of the loan. This was the first National Debt in Europe.

The expedition, badly led and attacked by plague, proved a dismal failure, and the aristocracy determined that a popular rule that could lead to such a disaster was not a good thing. The following year, therefore, they promulgated a new constitution by which the Ducal Council was enlarged to clip the Doge's wings while the power of election formerly resident in the General Assembly of the people was transferred to a Council which once elected was made self-perpetuating. Naturally only the right people were allowed to join its ranks.

Some six years later an event occurred, which made a great impression on the world of the time, and raised the prestige of Venice to a high point. This was the reconciliation of Barbarossa and Pope Alexander III. Alexander was a particularly stout upholder of the Papal supremacy. Barbarossa would not admit it, and he sent the difficult Pope packing. Later, in the process of suppressing an Italy that would not stay suppressed he was badly beaten, and had to cry quits with his old enemy. Venice, a neutral state, staged the pageant where, not for the