



By LIEUT. O. P. GABITES

OUR GUIDE at Pompeii showed us some faded and almost illegible lettering, now preserved under glass, and explained that here were the names of the candidates for elections. We also saw a notice saying "It is wonder, oh Wall, that thou hast not collapsed under the weight of so much nonsense."

To-day mural inscriptions fall into four broad groups—those by Italians for Italians, by Italians for the Allies, by the Allies for troops, and by the Allies for the Italians.

The first group is by far the biggest, and a large part of it remains from the Fascist period—everywhere the party sign-writer conscientiously plastered his DUCE or the classical DUX, but most of those within reach have now been erased, painted over, or defaced. The tags and uplift motives for the most part remain, the most common being VINCERE, sometimes it is VEDERE, VIVERE, VINCERE, sometimes COMBATTERE, and in suitable spots there are longer injunctions.

The rest give some indication of the mixed and always articulate political feeling resulting from years of suppression. The most common is the hammer and sickle, usually stencilled, but occasionally in a bold freehand. Sometimes this is surmounted by a good stencil of Lenin, and generally in red. I have seen these from Taranto to Trieste and from Ancona to Rome.

Then there is the host of VIVAs, abbreviated in the sign **W** which a dissenter inverts — **M** — so you have **M** BENEDETTO CROCE, and the same goes for BADOGLIO, SAVOIA, and IL

RE who had some same initial popularity which has since waned, and FUORI IL RE is not uncommon.

In the north round Monfalcone I encountered a batch which puzzled me at first—**W** IL 1925 or IL 1921, which is a graphic stencil of a dive-bomber, motor-cyclist, or a battleship. Later I decided it was the class of the year.

The farther north we went, the more marked became the partisan activity. From somewhere they had armed themselves with German equipment, which by this time was pretty plentiful—rifle, pistol, machine gun, or grenades—a red scarf was essential, and so was the Communist salute with the clenched fist. We were a little self-conscious at first returning it in kind as we did in returning the greeting "CIAOU" or "e viva," but it came with practice. A good many of the *partigiani* were opportunists, I fear, though some did excellent work, and at the end even the most bogus of them was willing to round up stray Germans who, however, always showed a marked disinclination to give themselves up to any other than Allied troops.

Round Trieste the **W** changed to ZIVEL, and the second word was always TITO. The adherents of different parties are by no means inarticulate, and the VIVAs are many for the Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, Action Party, and the rest.

Nor have the people been sparing in notices for Allied consumption, which range from laundry notices to ecstatic shouts of welcome, generally spelt phonetically, with VIVAs for the Allied leaders, STALIN (always correct), CHURCHILL