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109 - News Clippings Regarding
Education

3pp.

For years the youth of Italy have been educated to the Fascist pattern. Now we begin the big task of re-education.

Scrapping Mussolini's School Books

At a conference of Italian professors and AMG teachers in uniform held in Naples, I have listened to plans for the re-education of Italy.

Here were men who have been entrusted with the re-education of a nation, preoccupied with the momentous task of organizing Italy's twentieth century Renaissance.

It was a historic event but the lack of pomp and ceremony would have broken Mussolini's heart. The conference took place in an AMG building, the members sitting on bentwood chairs round an office desk, smoking as they talked.

A pile of gaily coloured children's school books on the desk were passed round, scanned, discussed and blue-pencilled. Some were condemned entirely.

These books, innocent as they appeared with their delightful illustrations, had been the most successful and cunning of all Mussolini's confidence tricks. For twenty-two years they were his chief instrument for injecting the Fascist poison into the souls of Italian youth.

Here, mingled with art and poetry, was political propaganda in its most insidious form—stirring the nursery to capture the minds of children as soon as they learned to speak.

JEW BAITING

At least 25 per cent. of every book were devoted to the glorification of war and the might of Fascism. Almost every story pointed the moral of the Fascist motto "Credere, Obbedire, Combattere"—to have faith in the leader, to obey without question and to fight.

An alphabet book for children "D is for Duce—greater than all the mountains of the earth," while in another book the Great One passes on to the nation his own supernatural gifts. "The Italians can do

miracles," I read. "The Duce is the one who awakes the will in our hearts. The Duce is therefore the Great Magician."

In a book for girls of twelve the leader is told: "In Italy, there is now a Messiah who, with ardour and a deep passion, asks the Italian mothers to be more prolific."

Even arithmetic does not escape the poison pen. Instead of the traditional marbles, apples and ples, the pupils are asked to add and subtract battleships and warplanes.

Propaganda is more blatant in the books for the older children. Much space is given to the youth movements of the "Balilla" and the "She-Wolf's Daughters." Here is an example.

By

JOSEPH GARRITY

"They gave the membership card of the She-Wolf's Daughters to Carla. On the back are written certain very beautiful words—'In the name of the Lord and of Italy I swear to follow the orders of the Duce and to serve with all my strength and, if it is necessary, with my blood the cause of the Fascist Revolution.'"

"The teacher read in a loud and moving voice and then all the children replied 'I swear'."

Boys who had taken a similar oath were told "Balilla, little soldiers of the Italian youth, in your solemn swearing you have invoked the testimony of the Lord and of Italy. Nothing is therefore more sacred than your oath. You have sworn to follow, without discussion, the orders of the Duce. You are therefore a soldier of the Duce."

Not even Jew-baiting is omitted. In a book for senior

scholars printed last year I read: "The Jewish race has spread over the earth like a malediction and has astutely penetrated into the countries of the Aryan people. The Italy of Mussolini could not remain inactive before the association of business interests spreading discord and compromising every idea."

One "educational" book which will never see a classroom again stated "The Black-shirt is not a uniform—it is a battle-dress" and "It is necessary that the Mediterranean Sea belongs to Italy. Other powerful nations have nothing to do with it and we must mop them up. Fascist Italy must push herself to the supremacy of the seas and the skies."

The censors chuckled as they came to the sentence "Mussolini, like Caesar, marched on Rome. Also, like Caesar, he conquered the world." They also dismissed the claim "Now England is conquered. The Italian Navy overcomes the English one."

These few samples are merely an indication of what has been taught in Italian schools for almost a quarter of a century.

Obviously the mere deletion of such propaganda from future schoolbooks cannot undo the psychological damage already caused. How shall the builders of the new Italy set about the task of restoration and re-education?

HUMAN ROBOTS

Dr. Francesco Scaglione, patriot professor and the new Prefect of Schools in the Naples Province, told me his plans after the conference.

"We have no illusions about the enormous difficulties of our task," he said. "But hundreds of writers and teachers, suppressed for so many years by Fascism, have rallied to our cause and are losing no time to exploit their new-found freedom."

"Our slogan will be the motto of the French Revolution—'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.' The new education will embody the spirit of Voltaire's classic remark, 'I disagree with what you say but I

UNION JACK

27-1-44 NAPLES

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Odeon Cinema: Special film
for the troops every evening
at 8.00 hrs. (Admission 5s
to 40s & 100s).
Opera House: Thurs. Fri.
and Sat. "Fanny Hill"
and "The Girl in the
Shoe" 1928 hrs. Admission
5 hrs. Tickets through 100s.
87
Mrs. Aspinwall Cinema
and Hotel. 3 shows daily.
Parlova (Grand Theatre)
"Pride of the Yankees" 3

ARGUMENTS

For the re-education of Italy, the student will be trained to experiment with his own ideas. He will not be asked to accept word facts and figures until he has carried out his own inquiries and tests and proved them to be true. Pupils will be encouraged to argue with the teacher who will use every opportunity to promote open discussion on all subjects.

Although the new educationists regard Fascism as a "black era" in Italy's history, they do not intend to ban reference to it in the new history books. It will be recorded as a national tragedy in which the people allowed themselves to be misled and will be used as a warning for the future.

Four thousand teachers are still being trained in the new methods of instruction.

The great experiment will begin in a few days when 1,000 teachers and 20,000 grade school children enter the "freedom schools" in Naples city on February 1.

Congratulates AMG

WASHINGTON, April 3 — The secretary general of the Catholic University of America, Dr. Roy J. de Ferrari, today congratulated the AMG on the speech with which schools were reopened in liberated Italy. He added praise for the Italian educators who jettisoned textbooks of Fascist influences.

"Stars & Stripes"
4-4-44 Naples
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ENTIRE FACULTY OF BARI UNIVERSITY RESIGNS OVER NEW LAW ABOLISHING CERTAIN COURSES.

BARI, May 17 — The Academic Corps of the University of Bari Resigned in a body today in protest against the action of the Badoglio Cabinet last week in abolishing a number of special courses offered by the local institution.

The wholesale resignation of professors, instructors, and tutors followed the resignation offered two days earlier by the head of the university, Rector Angelo Fraccacreta. The faculty passed formal resolutions defending the courses abolished and counseled with a request that execution of the new law be stayed indefinitely.

The Bari section of the Party of Action met during the day and adopted a resolution asking the Government to continue the courses for the remainder of the academic year, authorizing students concerned with credits toward degrees in these subjects to take examinations at the end of the year at the University of Naples.

In Salerno, Minister of National Education Adolfo Omodeo, made no move to rescind the order. He issued a statement in which he said Italy runs the risk of having too many institutions of higher learning for the number of qualified instructors and funds available.

(UNN)

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School Textbook Contracts Let for 1944 School Year

SEAT OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT, February 26- The Ministry of National Education announced today (Saturday) that a revised series of textbooks for use in the elementary schools of Liberated Italy is now being published.

The publishing contract has been awarded to two publishing firms. Books for use in Campania, Lucania, Puglia, the Abruzzi and Molise are being published by the Dante Alighieri Publishing House. Those books for use in Sicily and Calabria are being published by the firm of Ires & bellotti. (PWB).

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