

ACE

10000 / 129 / 14

17613

10005 / 129 / 14

19613

Information Rec'd

Region III

Oct. 43 - / /

ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT

AMGOT Hq.

40

Translation of a speech delivered by Dr. Adolfo Omodeo
Rector of the University of Naples on 14 October, 1943, at
a Convocation for the reopening of the University after the
burning by the Germans on 12 September, 1943

193

modifications
changes 19 Nov
HMB

ADDED ON 10/10/43
 THE HONORARY INGT FACE OF GERMANY 1943
 (Speech given in the University of Naples, 14 October 1943)
 39

Gentlemen,

When the Hebrews under the Maccabees reconquered the Temple, at the top of Mount Zion, which had been desecrated by Antiochus IV, it was the first ^{act} care of the faithful to purify it, to raise the altar again and to rekindle the sacred fire.

It is something alike that we are doing to-day in this hall which still shows the marks of barbaric fire; we are re-opening our ^{University}, more than seven centuries old university, one among the four oldest universities in the world, which was founded by emperor Frederick II in 1223, in which Thomas Aquinas taught as well as ^{Gambartista} G. B. Vico and ^{Sanctus} J. De Sanctis, and in which the studies of law, medicine and mathematics at times attained heights that are unparalleled in the history of learning.

We take up again the work that violence has attempted to break down, and we re-assert the immortal life of the spirit and of science in front of the busts of Cavour and Mazzini, that, having been spared by fire, recall us to the high-minded ideals of the Risorgimento.

Gentlemen, let us bear the facts in our mind. It was late in the afternoon of September 12th, 1943, the seven hundred and twenty first year since the foundation of this university, ^{while} the city was emptying ^{undergoing} the German terror, and the buildings of the university were closed and still. It was a Sunday, moreover, and our undergraduates, driven hither and thither through the world by the war, were mostly absent from Naples. Some German patrolmen swooped upon two poor Italian sailors just outside our gate; they ^{tried to defend himself} stripped them of their uniforms and beat them up. One of them ^{beat them and} showed fright; and it was decided to shoot him on the spot so as to have a pretext to ^{attack} rage against the university buildings. The Germans ran through the neighbouring houses, hounded their dwellers down and compelled them to look on, kneeling, while the cruel execution was performed. By gun fire from their armoured cars they burst our gates open, and on entering they started by

care of the faithful, to purify it, to raise the altar again and to rekindle the sacred fire.

It is something ^{simply} alive that we are doing to-day in this hall which still shows the marks of barbaric fire; we are re-opening our ^{University,} more than seven centuries old university, one among the four oldest universities in the world, which was founded by emperor Frederick II in 1223, in which Thomas Aquinas taught as well as ^{philosophy} A. B. Vico and R. De Sanctis, and in which the studies of law, medicine and mathematics at times attained heights that are unparalleled in the history of learning.

We take up again the work that violence has attempted to break down, and we re-assert the immortal life of the spirit and of science in front of the busts of Cavour and Mazzini, that, having been spared by fire, recall us to the high-minded ideals of the Risorgimento.

Gentlemen, let us bear the facts in our mind. It was late in the afternoon of September 12th, 1943, the seven hundred and twenty first year since the foundation of this university, ^{while} the city was enduring the German terror, and the buildings of the university were closed and still. It was a Sunday, moreover, and our undergraduates, driven hither and thither through the world by the war, were mostly absent from Naples. Some German patrolmen swooped upon two poor Italian sailors just outside our gate; they stripped them of their uniforms and beat them up. One of them ^{beat them and} ^{tried to defend himself} showed fright; and it was decided to shoot him on the spot so as to have a pretext to ^{attack} ^{against} the university buildings. The Germans ran through the neighbouring houses, hounded their dwellers down and compelled them to look on, kneeling, while the cruel execution was performed. By gun fire from their armoured cars they burst our gates open, and on entering they started by

13.8
wrecking the inscriptions on which the university had recorded the names of its dead in the first world war; they then poured torrents of petrol everywhere, throughout the depth of our buildings, a matter of over 300 metres - up to Piazza S. Domenico, and, ^{while} when the lecture rooms ^{were} burned as fires, they went off dragging away the unhappy hostages with them to a neighbouring borough where on the next day ^{they shot} the fourteen carabinieri were shot whose crime had been to resist the destruction of the central telephone station. The fire brigade was called up by our porters, but it was powerless to interfere, owing to the orders of the German authorities according to which the university buildings were to be given up to the flames.

Such ^{are} (have) the facts ^{are} in their dry and frightful simplicity. No ^{instead,} hazard incident; no irresistible outbreak of war fury, but rather a careful plan, drawn up with icy perversity, scarcely camouflaged by a crime entailing the shooting of ^{an innocent} a guiltless sailor; everything done according to the technique that is well known to us since we have watched the German unleashing common criminals, whom they had previously let out of prison, on to the shops they had already looted themselves, in order to shoot a documentary picture as evidence that the looting was due to the Italians and that the German troops had re-established order.

I feel duty bound to raise the loudest protest to the whole civilized world and to every human heart against so apocalyptic an infamy; to protest not only on behalf of my own university, but - since it is the first to be faced among the martyred schools - on behalf also of all the higher institutes the Germans have wrecked; on behalf of the Polish and Bohemian universities that have been annihilated together with the cultured classes of those countries; on behalf of the Louvain university ^{of} which has been given over to fire for the second time; on behalf of all the houses of learning which may have suffered, from Norway to Greece, from Holland to Russia. The Germans object is obvious. They mean to extinguish every spark of thought, to maim the minds as they appear to have maimed

Piazza S. Domenico, and, when the lecture rooms burned ^{they shot} as fires, they went off dragging away the unhappy hostages with them to a neighbouring borough where on the next day the fourteen carabinieri were shot whose crime had been to resist the destruction of the central telephone station. The fire brigade was called up by our porters, but it was powerless to interfere owing to the orders of the German authorities according to which the university buildings were to be given up to the flames.

Such ^{are} (have) the facts been in their day and frightful simplicity. No happened incident; no irresistible outbreak of war fury, ^{instead,} but rather a careful plan, drawn up with icy perversity, scarcely camouflaged by a crime entailing the shooting of ^{an innocent} a guiltless sailor; everything done according to the technique that is well known to us since we have watched the German unleashing common criminals, whom they had previously let out of prison, on to the shops they had already looted themselves, in order to shoot a documentary picture as evidence that the looting was due to the Italians and that the German troops had re-established order.

I feel duty bound to raise the loudest protest to the whole civilized world and to every human heart against so apocalyptic an infamy; to protest not only on behalf of my own university, but - since it is the first to be faced among the martyred schools - on behalf also of all the higher institutes the Germans have wrecked; on behalf of the Polish and Bohemian universities that have been annihilated together with the cultured classes of those countries; on behalf of the Louvain university ^{of} which has been given over to fire for the second time; on behalf of all the homes of learning which may have suffered, from Norway to Greece, from Holland to Russia. The Germans object is obvious. They mean to extinguish every spark of thought, to ^{mean to} main the minds as they appear to have maimed the bodies of the peoples when they ^{mean to} ~~and~~ at enslaving, so as to provide the new

16
97

hairs of serfs for a new German feudalism. They mean to prevent that anything live and pulsate in the world except their own "Kultur" - which is merely barren technique, devoid of the light of thought and of the inspiration of poetry. It is a monstrous form of jealousy that attests the spiritual cowardice of the Nazis who dread the free intellectual competition owing to their awareness of their own sterility, an awareness that is evidenced by racial persecutions.

This is a sin against the spirit for which not even the hospitals show mercy; it is an ^{awful} ^{terrible} proof that tyranny has degraded a people which ~~once~~ once gave Luther, Goethe and Kant to the world, down to the level of a filthy rabble.

Anger and wrath might have overcome us and bring us down to the Nazi level leading us to call for the law of retaliation - as might not be ^{perhaps} ^{injustice} (iniquitous) - so that they might ensure what they have caused others to endure; and to call also for a sweeping curse upon the German mind, if, being trained to scholarly control, we did not perceive that in so doing, we should bring ourselves down as low as the enemies ^{out} (are); we would think "racially" by ascribing an inextinguishable stain to "Deutschentum" and conceiving a people as a rigid and unchangeable unit. We do not mean to descend to the brutality of the enemy; we do not mean to welcome the frantic nightmares that the enemy attempts to enforce (as ideas) by violence. They are not unknown instincts of a race. Such a myth is disavowed not only by the contribution to civilization that Germany has provided in her best days, but also by the fact that the German speaking Slaves - most loyal guardians of freedom, the Dutch, the first spread religious tolerance and free scientific research, and the Scandinavian peoples "not just among mortals" as the Ethiopians of Homer - all belong to the German stock.

poetry. It is a monstrous form of jealousy that attests the spiritual cowardice of the Nazis who drove the free intellectual competition owing to their awareness of their own sterility, an awareness that is evidenced by racial persecutions.

This is a sin against the spirit for which not even the Goebbels show mercy; it is an ^{awful} proof that Germany has degraded a people which ~~is~~ once like Luther, Goethe and Kant to the world, down to the level of a filthy rabble.

Anger and wrath might have overcome us and bring us down to the Nazi level leading us to call for the law of retaliation - as might not be ^{perhaps} unjust (iniquitous) - so that they might endure what they have caused others to endure; and to call also for a sweeping curse upon the German mind, if, being trained to scholarly control, we did not perceive things in so doing, we should bring ourselves down as low as the enemies ^{our} (and) we would think "racially" by ascribing an inextinguishable stain to "Deutschentum" and conceiving a people as a rigid and unchangeable unit. We do not mean to descend to the brutishness of the enemy; we do not mean to welcome the frantic nightmares that the enemy attempts to enforce (as ideas) by violence. They are not inborn instincts of a race. Such a myth is disavowed not only by the contribution to civilization that Germany has provided in her best days, but also by the fact that the German speaking tribes - most loyal guardians of freedom, the Dutch, who first created religious tolerance and free scientific research, and the Scandinavian peoples "most just among mortals" as the Ethiopians of Homer - all belong to the German stock.

No, we are up against a fact which is simpler as well as more ^{terrible} than the moral degradation of a people. Responsibility is unescapable; it

it is no with peoples as well as with single individuals. Past deeds and ancestral glories ^{do} to not remove the actual and present responsibility; man may soar to angelic heights as well as plunge into devilish evil. ^{denying depths.} We are face to face with a Christian concept that is valid for every sect and every creed; responsibility is unescapable by men and by peoples.

[illegible]

The facts speak for themselves. You, British and American soldiers, have bombed our city more than a hundred times; we have seen our human and many monuments wrecked; we have shed tears ^{over} our dead; but, despite an active propaganda by the tyrants, we never did hate you. We were aware that fierce war methods had been forced upon you by the violence of those who had started the war; and our hatred was aimed at those who had willed this evil. When you ^{came} reached among us, we perceived ^{on your faces} our own humanity, our own capability to suffer to and to enjoy (on your faces) we have seen them to be marked by the sum total of the human experiences of our civilization, by the everlasting achievements of all men who have lived and are living under the sky; and we have become aware of the possibility of working with you, who have, officially, been our foes until yesterday. But it was not so with regard to the Germans, not even when they officially were our allies. Nothing called to us out of the gloomy, cold and stony solidity of their countenances; out of their grudging acknowledgment. When they showed what they were capable of, they revealed to us an abyssal ⁱⁿhatredfulness. We experienced the same shiver of horror that - according to ancient tradition - was experienced by their ancestors, the Celts of the Sarmatic steppe, when they ^{first met} saw us against the whiteborn Rhine.

An event has taken place of the ^{sort} gravity (or which) it belongs to

terrible

unbalanced

is ~~an~~ one: it entails winning back this roving people to human brotherhood, replacing it along the nations, making it collaborate with them so that the world may bloom again. It will call for measureless wisdom from those who will fight the battle for the peace, from the new missionaries of thought who must conquer ^{that which} ~~this that~~ ^{is} ~~Vlad~~ would have called "barbaric incursions". It will be a most difficult task to blend the necessary ~~stiffness~~ ^{firmness} with clear-sighted responsibility.

Yet, if such thoughts must assist us in getting over the plague of Mussi-Tenton folkies, they ought never to delay us in our work of defense and of liberation. It behooves us firstly to free Italy: this call springs forth from every clove of our soil, from every troop of our brothers who have been killed, from every place that reminds us of our life as a free people. Citizens of Naples, recall to yourselves the feeling of moral purification that you experienced ~~when~~ ^{and} armed with few rifles and some machine guns, it was granted to you to counter force by force and to put to flight the armoured cars of the enemy from impregnable barricades. Those who came back to Naples, as I did, after those days found you transformed, alive with an elation that is still with us. But now, Neapolitans, the work is not finished yet. It is a hard work and a long one; bring it to an end.

And you, who in a small number represent the underpinnings of this university, listen to the words of your teachers; join the columns; encourage as many as you are able to return. Let those who possess the required capabilities, become partisans; should the Allied forces call up legions of Italian volunteers, enroll yourselves; ^{do this any} ~~(anyhow, by whatever means)~~.

Let me talk to you as a father who has entered the trials of war ⁱⁿ ~~(in)~~ himself and through his son. I understand you. Many of you have been be-

littled by the downfall, by the breaking down of all the wanted organizations.

who will fight for the peace, from the new mission of thought
who must ^{be} ^{the} ^{new} ^{mission} ^{of} ^{thought} ^{who} ^{must} ^{be} ^{the} ^{new} ^{mission} ^{of} ^{thought}. It
that be a most difficult task to blend the necessary ^{with} ^{clear-}
^{righted responsibility.}

Not, if such thoughts must assail us in getting over the plague of Manifestation folloes, they ought never to delay us in our work of defense and of liberation. It behoves us firstly to free Italy; this call springs forth from every clod of our soil, from every band of our brothers who have been killed, from every place that reminds us of our life as a free people. Citizens of Naples, recall to yourselves the feeling of moral justification that you experienced whⁿ armed with few rifles and some machine guns, it was granted to you to counter force by force and to get to flight the armoured cars of the enemy from impracticable barriades. Those who came back to Naples, as I did, after those days found you unimpaired, alive with an elation that is still with us. But now, Hegopolitans, the work is not finished yet. It is a hard work and a long one; bring it to an end.

And you, who in a small number represent the underground of this
university, listen to the words of your teachers; join the colours; encourage
as many as you are able to return. Let those who possess the required capabil-
ilities, become petitioners; should the Allied Armies call up legions of
Italian volunteers, enroll yourselves; ^{do this any} anyhow, by whatever means,

He has talk to you as a father who has endured the trials of war in
 own flesh and blood. I understand you. Many of you have been be-
 hind him and through his eyes. I understand you. Many of you have been be-
 hindered by the downfall, by the breaking down of all the wanted organizations,
 by the unseemly behaviour of some leaders who were unprepared for unexpected
 events. Many among you have fought ^{without the feeling of} (and even missed the argument) when for victory
 of your

parents; others have been aware of the uselessness of action in a system that was crumbling owing to the corruption of tyranny. Many feel their initiative stifled by their own loneliness, for courage, and above all military courage, needs the stimulus and the assistance of a rule of honour, of emulation, of a kind of boastfulness. And you are all aware of the crushing unpopularity of your own generation: the state has collapsed; the cities are wrecked; the families are scattered; the persevering work of previous generations is annihilated. Even the stimulus of hope seems to have vanished.

Despite this, the very extremity of the evils and of what ought to cause us to feel that this storm has spent itself. A shipwrecked man who stands naked on the shore ought to thank God for granting him to exert himself to the limit of his own capabilities. It is true courage who knows how to have courage in loneliness, when stripped of the power of habit and tradition. Military defeats only become serious when they lead us to doubt of ourselves and of our country; but every great nation and every great army have known defeat; you need only think of Jena, and of 1913, in so far as France and Germany are concerned. Even Garibaldi was defeated more than once. Homer's heroes, with their wonderful candour, ascribed the failing of their courage and the loss of equanimity to a hostile god, as they ascribed their regained heart to a friendly god.

The evil and rottenness of the fallen regime we shall sweep away, as all nations do when renewing themselves. Now, young men, the whole of Italy will be with you, and you will experience the advantage of marching on speed by the well-wishing of the fatherland and of your mothers, and you will feel proud to avenge your brothers when the Teuton has foully kidnapped.

Young men, turn to the pure tradition of Garibaldi. That tradition will spell the purification of our country. Garibaldi, the stainless redeemer, will be with you, and let his name be your war cry.

needs the stimulus and the assistance of a rule of honor, of emulation, of a kind of boastfulness. And you are all aware of the crushing unpopularity of your own generation; the state has collapsed; the cities are wrecked; the families are scattered; the persevering work of previous generations is annihilated. Even the stimulus of loss seems to have vanished.

Despite this, the very extremity of the evils and of want ought to cause us to feel that the storm has spent itself. A shipwrecked man who stands naked on the shore ought to thank God for granting him to exert himself to the limits of his own capabilities. He has truly courage who knows how to have courage in loneliness, when stripped of the props of habit and tradition. Military defeats only become serious when they lead us to doubt of ourselves and of our country; but every great nation and every great army has known defeat; you need only think of Jena, and of 1918. In so far as France and Germany are concerned, even Garibaldi was defeated more than once. Honor's horses, with their wonderful candour, ascribed the falling of their courage and the loss of equanimity to a hostile god, as they ascribed their regained heart to a friendly god.

The evil and rottenness of the fallen regime we shall sweep away, as all nations do when renewing themselves. Now, young men, the whole of Italy will be with you, and you will experience the advantage of marching on speedily the well-wishing of the fatherland and of your others, and you will feel proud to avenge your brothers when the Teuton has really kidnapped.

Young men, turn to the pure tradition of Garibaldi. That tradition will spell the purification of our country. Garibaldi, the stainless rescuer, will be with you, and let his name be your war cry.

Despite the present sadness, I venture to assure you, ^{by speaking at today's assembly} ~~186~~ ¹⁸⁶ young men, that luck will be with you, much more, much more than it has been with your fathers. A

A day will come in which many among you will recall this gloomy reunion in this wrecked hall as the grey twilight of a sunny day. You are still in a position to fight for freedom, and the hardships you have endured will spare you the weakness of militarism. You will build up the fatherland once more, but this (fatherland) of Mussolini, humane, linked up with every other (fatherland), and you will wipe fanatical nationalism away. You will help in giving new laws and a new constitution to Italy, a real and deep-reaching liberty such as to fashion the outlook and to cultivate every culture of the (land). You will collaborate in constructing the moral conscience and perhaps the stable federation of all European peoples; and it may help you in your great undertaking to have lived for a time under tyranny. You will be able to point out the abysses of Satan to the free peoples who have never experienced tyranny, so that they may avoid it. You will (run) throughout the world in order to reconstruct the economic life of Italy, and you will see the wrecked cities rising up once more and life will run more wholesome through you and through the country. Such (has) not been our only fate, those of us who are veterans of the trench war. After long years of struggle (of struggle) on the Carso and the Piave we grasped victory and we experienced an overwhelming joy. We thought we held victory in our hand. We had achieved the territorial unification of the nation. We had crushed the empire which, for more than fifty years, threatened to invade the Po valley. We felt certain of the future; nothing could stop us. On the contrary, victory escaped us (as) a mirage. (The) vision came, which (has) become with foul rhetoric, poisoned the people and the youth of Italy. And while we were still unripe for political action, we were tied up by an evil spell that prevented us from taking action. We found ourselves paralyzed as in a nightmare: we perceived the dangers and the evils, and, as if turned to stone, we were unable to say out; as if turned to stone, we ^{wanted} might to run and (every one of) our limbs refused to (move). The evil spell of tyranny had overcome us, and what had been gained by the country was

[illegible]

Despite all, my children, your luck will be better than our own.

Adolfo Omodeo
THE HORRIFYING FACE OF GERMANY

(Speech given in the University of Naples, 14 October 1943)

Gentlemen:

When the Hebrews under the Maccabees reconquered the Temple, at the top of Mount Zion, which had been desecrated by Antiochus IV, the first act of the faithful was to purify it, to raise the altar again and to rekindle the sacred fire.

It is something similar that we are doing today in this hall which still shows the marks of barbaric fire; we are re-opening our university, more than seven centuries old, one of the four oldest universities in the world, founded by Emperor Frederick II in 1224, in which Thomas Aquinas taught as well as Giambattista Vico and Francesco De Sanctis, and in which the studies of law, medicine and mathematics at times attained heights that are famous in the history of learning.

We take up again the work that violence has attempted to break down, and we re-assert the immortal life of the spirit and of science in front of the busts of Cavour and Mazzini, that, having been spared by fire, remind us of the high-minded ideals of the Risorgimento.

Gentlemen, let us bear the facts in mind. It was late in the afternoon of September 12th, 1943, the seven hundred and twentieth year since the foundation of this university, while the city was undergoing the German terror, and the buildings of the university were closed and still. It was a Sunday, moreover, and our undergraduates, driven hither and thither through the world by the war, were mostly absent from Naples. Some German patrols swooped upon two poor Italian sailors just outside our gate; they beat them and stripped them of their uniforms. One of them tried to defend himself, and it was decided to shoot him on the spot so as to have a pretext to attack the university buildings. The Germans ran through the neighbouring houses, hounded their dwellers down and compelled them to look on, kneeling, while the cruel execution was performed. By gun fire from their armoured cars

shows the marks of barbaric fire; we are re-opening our university, more than seven centuries old, one of the four oldest universities in the world, founded by Emperor Frederick II in 1224, in which Thomas Aquinas taught as well as Giambattista Vico and Francesco De Sanctis, and in which the studies of law, medicine and mathematics at times attained heights that are famous in the history of learning.

We take up again the work that violence has attempted to break down, and we re-assert the immortal life of the spirit and of science in front of the busts of Cavour and Mazzini, that, having been spared by fire, remind us of the high-minded ideals of the Risorgimento.

Gentlemen, let us bear the facts in mind. It was late in the afternoon of September 12th, 1943, the seven hundred and twentieth year since the foundation of this university, while the city was undergoing the German terror, and the buildings of the university were closed and still. It was a Sunday, moreover, and our undergraduates, driven hither and thither through the world by the war, were mostly absent from Naples. Some German patrols swooped upon two poor Italian sailors just outside our gate; they beat them and stripped them of their uniforms. One of them tried to defend himself, and it was decided to shoot him on the spot so as to have a pretext to attack the university buildings. The Germans ran through the neighbouring houses, hounded their dwellers down and compelled them to look on, kneeling, while the cruel execution was performed. By gun fire from their armoured cars they burst open our gates, and on entering they started by wrecking the inscriptions on which the university had recorded the names of its dead in the first world war; they then poured torrents of petrol everywhere, throughout the depth of our buildings - a matter of over 300 metres - up to Piazza S. Domenico, and, while the lecture rooms were burning like pyres, they 184

went off dragging the unhappy hostages with them to a neighbouring borough where on the next day they shot the fourteen carabinieri whose crime had been to resist the destruction of the central telephone station. The fire brigade was called up by our ~~crisis~~, but it was powerless to interfere owing to the orders of the German authorities according to which the university buildings were to be given up to the flames.

Such are the facts in their dry and frightful simplicity. No hazardous incident; no irresistible outbreak of war fury, but instead, a careful plan, drawn up with icy perversity, scarcely camouflaged by a crime entailing the shooting of an innocent sailor; everything done according to the technique that is well known to us since we have watched the Germans unleashing common criminals, whom they had previously let out of prison, on to the shops they had already looted themselves, in order to shoot a documentary picture as evidence that the looting was due to the Italians and that the German troops had re-established order.

I feel duty bound to raise the loudest protest to the whole civilized world and to every human heart against so apocalyptic an infamy; to protest not only on behalf of my own university, but - since it is the first to be freed among the martyred schools - on behalf also of all the higher institutes the Germans have wrecked; on behalf of the Polish and Bohemian universities that have been annihilated together with the cultured classes of those countries; on behalf of the university of Louvain which has been given over to fire for the second time; on behalf of all the homes of learning which may have suffered, from Norway to Greece, from Holland to Russia. The Germans object is obvious. They mean to extinguish every spark of thought, to maim the minds as they appear to have maimed the bodies of the peoples whom they mean to enslave, so as to provide new hordes of serfs for a new German feudalism. They mean to prevent that anything live and pulsate in the world except their own "kultur" - which is merely barren technique, devoid of the light of thought and of the inspiration of poetry. It is a monstrous

hazard incident; no irresistible outbreak of war fury; but instead, a careful plan, drawn up with icy perversity, scarcely camouflaged by a crime entailing the shooting of an innocent sailor; everything done according to the technique that is well known to us since we have watched the Germans unleashing common criminals, whom they had previously let out of prison, on to the shops they had already looted themselves, in order to shoot a documentary picture as evidence that the looting was due to the Italians and that the German troops had re-established order.

I feel duty bound to raise the loudest protest to the whole civilized world and to every human heart against so apocalyptic an infamy; to protest not only on behalf of my own university, but - since it is the first to be freed among the martyred schools - on behalf also of all the higher institutes the Germans have wrecked; on behalf of the Polish and Bohemian universities that have been annihilated together with the cultured classes of those countries; on behalf of the university of Louvain which has been given over to fire for the second time; on behalf of all the homes of learning which may have suffered, from Norway to Greece, from Holland to Russia. The Germans object is obvious. They mean to extinguish every spark of thought, to maim the minds as they appear to have maimed the bodies of the peoples whom they mean to enslave, so as to provide new hordes of serfs for a new German feudalism. They mean to prevent that anything live and pulsate in the world except their own "Kultur" - which is merely barren technique, devoid of the light of thought and of the inspiration of poetry. It is a monstrous form of jealousy that attests the spiritual cowardice of the Nazis who dread free intellectual competition owing to their awareness of their own sterility, an awareness that is evidenced by racial persecutions.

189

This is a sin against the spirit for which not even the Gospels show mercy; it is a terrible proof that tyranny has degraded a people which once gave Luther, Goethe and Kant to the world; down to the level of a filthy rabble.

Anger and wrath might here overcome us and bring us down to the Nazi level leading us to call for the law of retaliation - as perhaps might not be unjust - so that they might endure what they have caused others to endure; and to call also for a sweeping curse upon the German mind, if, being trained to scholarly control, we did not perceive that in so doing we should bring ourselves down as low as our enemies; we would think "racially" by ascribing an ineffaceable stain to "Deutschum" and conceiving a people as a rigid and unchangeable unit. We do not mean to descend to the brutishness of the enemy; we do not mean to welcome the frantic nightmares that the enemy attempts to enforce by violence. They are not inborn instincts of a race. Such a myth is disavowed not only by the contribution to civilization that Germany has provided in her best days, but also by the fact that the German speaking Swiss - most loyal guardians of freedom -, the Dutch, who first spread religious tolerance and free scientific research, and the Scandinavian peoples "most just among mortals" ^{like} / the Ethiopians of Homer - all belong to the German stock.

No, we are up against a fact which is simpler as well as more terrible the moral degradation of a people. Responsibility is unescapable; it is so with peoples as well as with single individuals. Past deeds and ancestral glories do not remove the actual and present responsibility; men may soar to angelic heights as well as plunge into demonic depths. We are face to face with a Christian concept that is valid for every sect and every creed; responsibility is unescapable by men and by peoples.

The breaking of the common ties of humanity, which are even above wars and caused Achilles and Priam to weep together, has called forth this abysmal catastrophe of the German people and has rendered them repulsive to

and to call also for a sweeping curse upon the German mind, if, being trained to scholarly control, we did not perceive that in so doing we should bring ourselves down as low as our enemies; we would think "racially" by ascribing an ineffaceable stain to "Deutschum" and conceiving a people as a rigid and unchangeable unit. We do not mean to descend to the brutishness of the enemy; we do not mean to welcome the frantic nightmares that the enemy attempts to enforce by violence. They are not inborn instincts of a race. Such a myth is disavowed not only by the contribution to civilization that Germany has provided in her best days, but also by the fact that the German speaking Swiss - most loyal guardians of freedom -, the Dutch, who first spread religious tolerance and free scientific research, and the Scandinavian peoples "most just among mortals" ^{like} / the Ethiopians of Homer - all belong to the German stock.

No, we are up against a fact which is simpler as well as more terrible the moral degradation of a people. Responsibility is unescapable; it is so with peoples as well as with single individuals. Past deeds and ancestral glories do not remove the actual and present responsibility; man may soar to angelic heights as well as plunge into demonic depths. We are face to face with a Christian concept that is valid for every sect and every creed; responsibility is unescapable by men and by peoples.

The breaking of the common ties of humanity, which are even above wars and caused Achilles and Priam to weep together, has called forth this abysmal catastrophe of the German people and has rendered them repulsive to mankind, apart from every economic and historical motive.

The facts speak for themselves. You, British and American soldiers, have bombed our city more than a hundred times; we have seen our homes and

many monuments wrecked; we have shed tears over our dead; but, despite an active propaganda by the tyrants, we never did hate you. We were aware that fierce war methods had been forced upon you by the violence of those who had started the war, and our hatred was aimed at those who had killed this evil. When you came among us, we perceived in your faces our own humanity, our own capability to suffer and to enjoy; we have seen them marked by the sum total of the human experiences of our civilization, by the everlasting achievements of all men who have lived and are living under the sky; and we have become aware of the possibility of working with you, who have officially been our foes until yesterday. But it was not so with regard to the Germans, not even when they were officially our allies. Nothing called to us out of the gloomy, cold and stony solidity of their countenances; out of their grudging aloofness. When they showed what they were capable of, they revealed to us an abysmal hatefulness. We experienced the same shiver of horror that - according to ancient tradition - was experienced by their ancestors, the Goths of the Sarmatic steppe, when they first met the witchborn Romans.

An event has taken place whose gravity it behoves us to ponder. During the Nazi rule an event has been brought to pass to which the German nation has been tending since the eighteenth century; a people of some 80 millions has shut itself up into a race; it has broken up the human commonwealth of civilized nations in order to become a race which cannot mix with others, to attain amirid. The Jew-haters have fallen into the same error which Israel incurred in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah during the fifth century B.C.; an error that Israel has been paying for during scores of centuries of anguish and persecution; the error of cutting the ties linking them to the rest of the world, of denying that good is good when it is done under the banner of another race, of denying every relation of duty and mercy towards those who do not belong to the race; of believing that ^{the} good, ^{the} true and beautiful - which are everlasting values - are subordinate to racial standards. From this arose the mad craving for an apocalyptic world-empire that Germany

of all men who have lived and are living under the sky; and we have become aware of the possibility of working with you, who have officially been our foes until yesterday. But it was not so with regard to the Germans, not even when they were officially our allies. Nothing called to us out of the gloomy, cold and stony solidity of their countenances; out of their grudging aloofness. When they showed what they were capable of, they revealed to us an abysmal hatefulness. We experienced the same shiver of horror that - according to ancient tradition - was experienced by their ancestors, the Goths of the Sarmatic steppe, when they first met the witchborn Huns.

An event has taken place whose gravity it behoves us to ponder. During the Nazi rule an event has been brought to pass to which the German nation has been tending since the eighteenth century; a people of some 80 millions has shut itself up into a race; it has broken up the human commonwealth of civilized nations in order to become a race which cannot mix with others, to attain emixis. The Jew-haters have fallen into the same error which Israel incurred in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah during the fifth century B.C.; an error that Israel has been paying for during scores of centuries of anguish and persecution; the error of cutting the ties linking them to the rest of the world, of denying that good is good when it is done under the banner of another race, of denying every relation of duty and mercy towards those who do not belong to the race; of believing that ^{the} good, ^{the} true and beautiful - which are everlasting values - are subordinate to racial standards. From this arose the mad craving for an apocalyptic world-empire that Germany would conquer by going back to her origins, to the primitive instincts of her race, by a morbid involution to primitiveness and barbarism; by forgetting every boon of civilization, for civilization is collaboration and common advancement of all humans beyond any national pride.

Civilization was to be destroyed in order that the German people might build up a new one, entirely their own; should the attempt fail, let the world sink into a new twilight of the gods. From this also comes the actual and providential punishment of this people, raving with brutish pride like Dante's Capaneo. Everything is centred on military preparation, but military preparation weakens all political capabilities; occasionally shrewd political moves have failed on the threshold of success because the moral foundations - on which political success ultimately depends - were too brittle. And no empire can be brought into being by conquest, for empire means the collaboration of peoples to common ends; and the curse of all nations falls upon the new "chosen people" which, unlike ancient Israel, possesses no strong inner life and is unable to give us what even secluded Israel gave us: the Psalms, the Book of Job, the endless humanity of Jesus Christ, the fiery soul of Paul of Tarsus. The problem is a terrible one: it entails winning back this unbalanced people to human brotherhood, integrating it among the nations, making it collaborate with them so that the world may bloom again. It will call for measureless wisdom from those who will fight the battle for the peace, from the new missionaries of thought who must conquer that which Vico would have called "return to barbarity". It will be a most difficult task to blend the necessary firmness with clear-sighted responsibility.

Yet, if such thoughts must assist us in getting over the plague of Nazi-Tauton follies, they ought never to delay us in our work of defense and of liberation. It behoves us firstly to free Italy; this call springs forth from every clod of our soil, from every tomb of our brothers who have been killed, from every place that reminds us of our life as a free people. Citizens of Naples, recall to yourselves the feeling of moral purification that you experienced when, armed with few rifles and some machine guns, it was granted to you to counter force by force and to put to flight the armoured cars of the enemy from impromptu barricades. Those who came back to Naples, as I did, after those days found you transfigured, alive with an

emotion that is still within us. But now, Neapolitans, the work is not finished

empire can be brought into being by conquest, for empire means the collaboration of peoples to common ends; and the curse of all nations falls upon the new "chosen people" which, unlike ancient Israel, possesses no strong inner life and is unable to give us what even secluded Israel gave us: the Psalms, the Book of Job, the endless humanity of Jesus Christ, the fiery soul of Paul of Tarsus. The problem is a terrible one: it entails winning back this unbalanced people to human brotherhood, integrating it among the nations, making it collaborate with them so that the world may bloom again. It will call for measureless wisdom from those who will fight the battle for the peace, from the new missionaries of thought who must conquer that which Vico would have called "return to barbarity". It will be a most difficult task to blend the necessary firmness with clear-sighted responsibility.

Yet, if such thoughts must assist us in getting over the plague of Nazi-Tenton follies, they ought never to delay us in our work of defense and of liberation. It behoves us firstly to free Italy; this call springs forth from every clod of our soil, from every tomb of our brothers who have been killed, from every place that reminds us of our life as a free people. Citizens of Naples, recall to yourselves the feeling of moral purification that you experienced when, armed with few rifles and some machine guns, it was granted to you to counter force by force and to put to flight the armoured cars of the enemy from impromptu barricades. Those who came back to Naples, as I did, after those days found you transfigured, alive with an elation that is still with us. But now, Neapolitans, the work is not finished yet. It is a hard work and a long one; bring it to an end.

And you, who in a small number represent the undergraduates of this university, listen to the words of your teachers; join the colours; encourage as many as you are able to return. Let those who possess the required capabilities, become partisans; should the Allied Armies call up legions of Italian volunteers, enroll yourselves; do this by any means whatsoever.

Let me talk to you as a father who has endured the trials of war himself and through his own flesh and blood. I understand you. Many of you have been bewildered by the downfall, by the breaking down of all the wonted organizations, by the unseen behaviour of some key men who were unprepared for unexpected events. Many among you have fought knowing that your parents had no wish for victory; others have been aware of the uselessness of action in a system that was crumbling owing to the corruption of tyranny. Many feel their initiative stifled by their own loneliness, for courage, and above all military courage, needs the stimulus and the assistance of a rule of honour, of emulation, of a kind of boastfulness. And you are all aware of the crushing unhappiness of your own generation; the state has collapsed; cities are wrecked; families are scattered; the persevering work of previous generations is annihilated. Even the stimulus of hope seems to have vanished.

Despite this, the very extremity of the evils and of misery ought to make us to feel that the storm has spent itself. A shipwrecked man who stands naked on the shore ought to thank God for granting him to exert himself to the limit of his own capabilities. He truly has courage who in spite of loneliness can be brave, though stripped of the props of habit and tradition. Military defeats become serious only when they lead us to doubt ourselves and our country; but every great nation and every great army has known defeat; one need only think of Jena, and of 1918, insofar as France and Germany are concerned. Even Garibaldi was defeated more than once. Homer's heroes, with their wonderful candour, ascribed the failing of their courage and the loss of equanimity to a hostile god, as they ascribed their regained heart to a friendly god.

The evil and rottenness of the fallen regime we shall sweep away, as all nations do when renewing themselves. Now, young men, the whole of Italy will be with you, and you will experience the advantage of marching ahead with the well-wishing of your country and of your mothers, and you will feel proud to avenge your brothers whom the Teuton has foully kidnapped.

many feel their initiative stifled by their own loneliness, for courage, and above all military courage, needs the stimulus and the assistance of a rule of honour, of emulation, of a kind of boastfulness. And you are all aware of the crushing unhappiness of your own generation: the state has collapsed; cities are wrecked; families are scattered; the persevering work of previous generations is annihilated. Even the stimulus of hope seems to have vanished.

Despite this, the very extremity of the evils and of misery ought to make us to feel that the storm has spent itself. A shipwrecked man who stands naked on the shore ought to thank God for granting him to exert himself to the limit of his own capabilities. He truly has courage who in spite of loneliness can be brave, though stripped of the props of habit and tradition. Military defeats become serious only when they lead us to doubt ourselves and our country: but every great nation and every great army has known defeat; one need only think of Jena, and of 1918, insofar as France and Germany are concerned. Even Garibaldi was defeated more than once. Homer's heroes, with their wonderful candour, ascribed the failing of their courage and the loss of equanimity to a hostile god, as they ascribed their regained heart to a friendly god.

The evil and rottenness of the fallen regime we shall sweep away, as all nations do when renewing themselves. Now, young men, the whole of Italy will be with you, and you will experience the advantage of marching ahead with the well-wishing of your country and of your mothers, and you will feel proud to avenge your brothers whom the Teuton has foully kidnapped.

Young men, turn to the pure tradition of Garibaldi. That tradition will spell the purification of our country. Garibaldi the stainless redeemer, will be with you, and let his name be your war cry.

In spite of today's sorrow, I can assure you, young men, that luck **179** will be with you, much more than with your fathers. A day will come in which many among you will recall this melancholy reunion in this wrecked hall as the grey dawn of a sunny day. You are still in a position to fight for freedom, and the hardships you have endured will spare you the madness

of militarism. You will build up your country once more, but the country of Mazzini, humane, linked up with every other land and you will wipe fanatical nationalism away. You will help give new laws and a new constitution to Italy, a real and deep-reaching liberty such as to fashion the outlook and to enliven every cell of the country. You will collaborate in constructing the moral unity and perhaps the stable federation of all European peoples; and it may help you in your great undertaking to have lived for a time under tyranny. You will be able to point out the abyss of Satan to the free peoples who have never experienced tyranny, so that they may avoid it. You will travel throughout the world in order to reconstruct the economic life of Italy, and you will see the wrecked cities rising up once more and life will run more wholesome through you and through the country. Such was not the fate of those of us who are veterans of the trench war. After long years of struggle on the Corso and the Piave we grasped victory and we experienced an overwhelming joy. We thought we held victory in our hand. We had achieved the territorial unification on the nation. We had crushed the empire which, for more than fifty years, threatened to invade the Po valley. We felt certain of the future; nothing could stop us. On the contrary, victory escaped us like a mirage. It became a venom which with foul rhetorics, poisoned the people and the youth of Italy. While we were still unripe for political action, we were tied up by an evil spell that prevented us from taking action. We found ourselves paralyzed as in a nightmare: we perceived the dangers and the evils, and, as if turned to stone, we were unable to cry out; as if turned to stone, we wanted to run and our limbs refused to stir. The evil spell of tyranny had overcome us, and what had been gained by the country was squandered for the benefit of the sinister adventurer. Now it is the loss of the treasure that we had won that is our worry, a worry that will follow us to our tomb.

Despite all this, my children, your luck will be better than our own.

for a time under tyranny. You will be able to point out the abyss of Satan to the free peoples who have never experienced tyranny, so that they may avoid it. You will travel throughout the world in order to reconstruct the economic life of Italy, and you will see the wrecked cities rising up once more and life will run more wholesome through you and through the country. Such was not the fate of those of us who are veterans of the trench war. After long years of struggle on the Carso and the Piave we grasped victory and we experienced an overwhelming joy. We thought we held victory in our hand. We had achieved the territorial unification on the nation. We had crushed the empire which, for more than fifty years, threatened to invade the Po valley. We felt certain of the future; nothing could stop us. On the contrary, victory escaped us like a mirage. It became a venom which with foul rhetorics, poisoned the people and the youth of Italy. While we were still unripe for political action, we were tied up by an evil spell that prevented us from taking action. We found ourselves paralyzed as in a nightmare: we perceived the dangers and the evils, and, as if turned to stone, we were unable to cry out; as if turned to stone, we wanted to run and our limbs refused to stir. The evil spell of tyranny had overcome us, and what had been gained by the country was squandered for the benefit of the sinister adventurer. Now it is the loss of the treasure that we had won that is our worry, a worry that will follow us to our tomb.

Despite all this, my children, your luck will be better than our own.

1689