Fascism and Resistance in Italy

Recent historical research on Italian fascism is suggesting a picture of the politics of that era which is murky, ambivalent, and even internally contradictory, especially in contrast to what used to be thought even a decade ago. Opponents of the regime, it now appears, sometimes also collaborated with it; seemingly stalwart supporters had hidden qualms; and mainstream support, while numerically very large until the onset of World War II, did not run very deep. For example, the novelist Ignazio Silone, a one-time communist who appeared at the time as one of the Mussolini regime’s loftiest opponents, has recently been accused of some quite startling moral-political compromises. This seminar seeks to determine what we now know about support for and resistance to Italian fascism, and to reflect on the implications of this analysis for modern political life more generally.

The following books should be available for purchase at the bookstore (with the possible exception of the Luzzatto):

- Finaldi, Giuseppe, Mussolini and Italian Fascism.
- Silone, Ignazio, Bread and Wine.
- Stille, Alexander, Benevolence and Betrayal: Five Italian Jewish Families under Fascism.
- Levi, Carlo, Christ Stopped at Eboli.
- Pugliese, Stanislao, ed., Fascism, Antifascism, and the Resistance in Italy.
- Foot, John, Italy’s Divided Memory.

Other readings are available on online reserve in Woodruff Library.

The seminar will not involve examinations. Course evaluation will be based on three short (1000 words) papers (50% together), a final, somewhat longer paper (2000-2500 words) (25%), and class participation (25%). A brief prospectus for the final paper is due on November 5; the paper itself is due on December 10, the final day of class.

The success of the class depends heavily on active student participation. Each student is allowed one (1) unexcused absence during the semester without penalty; after that, downgrading for class participation will be incurred. Students with four (4) or more unexcused absences will automatically receive an "F" for class participation.

Office hours will be held Tuesday 11:30-12:30 in Bowden Hall, 205. No appointment is necessary; appointments may also be scheduled at other hours. I may also be reached via email: wadamso@emory.edu

The following is a class schedule. Students are expected to have read the assignment for the class in question and to be prepared to discuss it.

January 26 – Introduction
Silone

February 2 – The Controversy over Ignazio Silone, 1

DeGrand, Alexander, “Comment,” Journal of Modern Italian Studies (Spring 2000): 57-60 (with reply by Canali) (included in previous online reserve item).

February 9 – The Controversy over Ignazio Silone, 2

Silone, Ignazio, in Richard Crossman, The God that Failed, 76-114 (online reserve).
First Short Paper due in class

Fascism

October 1 – Fascism: Origins and Nature of the Movement and the Regime

Finaldi, Giuseppe, Mussolini and Italian Fascism, 19-101 (chapters 3-7) and 134-51.

October 8- Fascism, Consent, and Dissent

Morgan, Philip, “‘The Years of Consent?’” in Kirk and McElligott, Opposing Fascism, 163-79 (online reserve).
Bobbio, Norberto, A Political Life, 11-36 (chapter 1)
Pugliese, Stanislao, Carlo Rosselli, Socialist Heretic and Antifascist Exile, 189-226 (online reserve).
Pugliese, Stanislao, ed., Fascism, Antifascism, and the Resistance in Italy, selection 39 (pp. 221-7)

October 15 – Fall Break (no class)

October 22 – Silone Revisited: Communists and Fascists in Fascist Italy

Silone, Ignazio, Bread and Wine.

October 29 – The Double Bind of Italy’s Jews

Cannistraro, Philip, “Mussolini and Fascist Anti-Semitism: Turning Point of a
Regime,” 133-139 (online reserve)
Stille, Alexander, Benevolence and Betrayal, 11-165, 317-25.

Second Short Paper due

November 5 – Levi’s Confino
Levi, Carlo, Christ Stopped at Eboli.
Final paper prospectus due

Resistance

November 12 – Resistance
Willson, Perry, “Italy,” in Kevin Passmore, ed., Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919-45, 11-32 (online reserve)
Passerini, Luisa, “Mussolini’s Visit to Mirafiori,” in Fascism in Popular Memory, 183-99 (online reserve)

Third Short Paper due

November 19 – The Battle for Rome
Pugliese, Fascism, Anti-fascism, selection 36 (pp. 200-6).

November 26 – The German Occupation and Italy’s “Divided Memory”
Foot, John, Italy’s Divided Memory, 1-29, 125-82 (chapters 1, 6-7).

December 3 – Italian Communism and the Resistance

December 10 – Review and Conclusion Final Papers due in class.