

"The fascist period is often compared to that of the War [World War I, when Socialist Party membership fell because members were conscripted into the army]. Well: one of the weaknesses of the Socialist Party was the fact that during the war it did not attend to the nucleus of 20 or 25,000 socialists who remained faithful; that it did not consider them as the organising element for the great masses who would flood in after the Armistice. It thus occurred that in 1919-20 this nucleus was submerged by the wave of new elements..." - ON, 1-15 April 1924

"The political parties: they were hardly solid, and they lacked consistent vitality; they only sprang into action during electoral campaigns. The newspapers: their connections with the political parties were weak, and few people read them" - #3, 80. "The petty intellectuals who formed the organisations of the left" - #3, 119

"A fatalistic and mechanistic conception of history prevailed... Another contradiction... if one is against voluntarism, one should appreciate 'spontaneity'. But not in this case: what was 'spontaneous' was deemed inferior..." - #2, 41

"Political confusion and polemical dilettantism of the leaders... paternalistic party of petty bourgeois with a ridiculous sense of self-importance... They could not understand what would happen if reaction triumphed because they did not experience the real struggle, only the struggle as a 'bookish principle'..." - #2, 41

**[In Socialist Party journalism]
"great importance [was] attached
to personal polemics... making the
adversary appear stupid,
ridiculous, dishonest, etc." The
newspapers did not provide much
hard information - #3, 86-7**

**"The weakness of the Italian
political parties... has consisted in
what one might call an imbalance
between agitation and
propaganda - though it can also be
termed lack of principle,
opportunism, absence of organic
continuity, imbalance between
tactics and strategy" - SPN 227**

**"A fatalistic and mechanistic
conception of history prevailed...
Another contradiction... if one is
against voluntarism, one should
appreciate 'spontaneity'. But not in
this case: what was 'spontaneous' was
deemed inferior..." - #2, 41. "Ignoring
and, even worse, disdaining so-called
'spontaneous' movements... may often
have very bad consequences..."
because the social crisis which
evokes the "spontaneous" movements
of the working class will generally
also evoke "a reactionary movement
of the right wing" - #2, 51. Equally, the
"political adventurers who uphold
spontaneity as the political 'method'
[fall into] a vulgar and immediate
contradiction that betrays its own
obvious practical origin: namely, the
immediate intent to replace a given
leadership by another one" - #2, 50.**

**"In Italy [the differentiation in the
labour movement] happened
afterward [after World War 1],
much more catastrophically, with
phenomena of mass betrayal and
desertion not witnessed in any
other country" - #2, 44. The Italian
labour movement "produced
whole layers of intellectuals who
crossed over as groups to the
other class" - #2, 144**

"It is necessary to create sober, patient people who do not despair in face of the worst horrors and who do not become exuberant with every silliness. Pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will" - #1, 172

Good socialist journalism "requires an unyielding struggle against habits of dilettantism, of improvisation, of 'rhetorical' solutions or those proposed for effect..." - SPN

"Each of the present members of the party, because of the selection process which has taken place [as the party narrowed down under fascist repression]... must be personally dear to us. He must be helped by the central leadership to improve himself, and to draw from the experience undergone all the lessons and the all the implications which it contains... [We need a journal and a] correspondence course [which] must become the first phase of a movement to create small party schools, designed to create organisers and propagandists who are Bolsheviks and not maximalists: who in other words have brains as well as lungs and a throat" - "The Programme of Ordine Nuovo", 1-15 April 1924.

"The decisive element in every situation is the permanently organised and long-prepared force which can be put into the field when it is judged that a situation is favourable (and it can be favourable only in so far as such a force exists, and is full of fighting spirit). Therefore the essential tasks is that of systematically and patiently ensuring that this force is formed, developed, and rendered ever more homogeneous, compact, and self-aware" - #2, 41

"In Turin [in 1920] we succeeded in eliminating the reformists from their organisational positions only *pari passu* as worker comrades, capable of practical work and not just of shouting 'Long live the revolution', were formed from the factory council movement... In 1921 [in the split between the Communists and the old Socialist Party] it was not possible to seize certain important positions... from the opportunists, because we did not have organising elements who were up to the job. Our majority in those centres melted away, as a result of our organisational weakness. By contrast, in certain centres, Venice for example, one capable comrade was enough to give us the majority, after a zealous work of propaganda and organisation of factory and trade-union cells..." - ON edito, 1 and 15 April 1924

"Experience in all countries has shown the following truth: the most favourable situations can be reversed as a result of the weakness of the cadres of the revolutionary party. Slogans only serve to impel the broad masses into movement and to give them a general orientation. But woe betide the party responsible if it has not thought about organising them in practice; about creating a structure which will discipline them and make them permanently strong. The occupation of the factories taught us many things in this respect" - ON edito, 1 and 15 April 1924

"All members of a political party should be regarded as intellectuals. This is an affirmation that can lend itself to ridicule, and yet... the function is to educate and lead" - #2, 203. "By intellectuals, one must understand not [only] those ranks commonly referred to by this term, but generally the whole social mass that exercises an organisational function..." - #1, 133

"A mass does not distinguish itself, does not become 'independent', without organising itself, and there is no organisation without intellectuals - that is, without organisers and leaders. But the process of creating intellectuals is long and difficult" - #3, 330

"Unless the editorial boards are linked to a disciplined rank and file movement, they tend to become little coteries of 'unarmed prophets' of to split... [to fall foul of] the Sisyphean task of the little periodicals which are addressed to everyone and no-one" - #3, 99

"Clairvoyance is a political value only in as much as it becomes disseminated passion, and in as much as it is the premiss for a strong will" - SPN 113

"In building a party, it is necessary to give it a 'monolithic' character rather than base it on secondary questions; therefore, painstaking care that there should be homogeneity between the leadership and the rank and file, between the leaders and their mass following. If, at the decisive moments, the leaders pass over to their 'true party', the rank and file militants are left suspended, paralysed and ineffective" - SPN.

"The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence... but active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, 'permanent persuader'..." - SPN 10

"The movement perfects itself, loses its arbitrary, 'symbiotic' traits, becomes truly independent, in the sense that in order to produce certain results it creates the necessary preconditions, and indeed devotes all its forces to the creation of these preconditions" - SPN.

"German predominance in the life of high culture, and in that of certain international political forces [i.e. the dominance of Marxist theory, most developed in Germany, in the socialist movement]: was this predominance in fact real...? ... no organic or disciplinary bonds ensured this supremacy, which was therefore merely a phenomenon of abstract cultural influence and of highly unstable prestige; (b) that such cultural influence in no way affected real activity, which was on the contrary fragmented, localised, and without overall direction" - SPN 188

**[Again on "organic centralism"]
"Political language becomes jargon, the atmosphere of a secret meeting is created: by always repeating the same formulas, by using the same rigidified mental schemes, one ends up truly thinking in the same way because one stops thinking altogether..." - #1, 159**

[Against Bordiga's "organic centralism"] - "Does the 'guarantee' of immutability exist? It does not exist". Ideology is "something historically produced... a ceaseless struggle" - #2, 56

"A collective consciousness, which is to say a living organism, is formed only after the unification of the multiplicity through friction on the part of the individuals... An orchestra tuning-up, every instrument playing by itself, sounds a most hideous cacophony, yet these warm-ups are the necessary condition for the orchestra to come to life as a single 'instrument'." - FSPN

The "tendency to construct an Esperanto or a Volapuk of philosophy and science... [and] regard whatever is not expressed in this Volapuk as delirium, prejudice, superstition, etc.... Many traces of this tendency can be found in [Bukharin's] Popular Manual..." - #3, 157

"On the ideological front... the defeat of the auxiliaries and the minor hangers-on is of all but negligible importance. Here it is necessary to engage battle with the most eminent of one's adversaries" - SPN 433

"The philosophy of praxis can only be conceived in a polemical form and in the form of a perpetual struggle.." - SPN

"One must be fair to one's enemies, in the sense that one must make an effort to understand what they really meant to say and not maliciously stop short at the superficial immediate meaning of their expressions. That is to say, if the end proposed is that of raising the tone and intellectual level of one's followers and not just the immediate aim of creating a desert around oneself by all means possible. The point of view to be adopted is this: one's supporter must discuss and uphold his own point of view in debate with capable and intelligent opponents and not just with clumsy untrained people..." - SPN 439

"In reality one can 'scientifically' foresee only the struggle, but not the concrete moments of the struggle, which cannot but be the results of opposing forces in continuous movement... one can "foresee" to the extent that one acts, to the extent that one applies a voluntary effort and therefore contributes concretely to creating the result 'foreseen'..." - SPN 438

"[In] the so-called intransigence theories is the rigid aversion on principle to what are termed compromises - and the derivative of this, which can be termed 'fear of dangers'... The conception upon which the aversion is based can only be the iron conviction that there exist objective laws of historical development similar in kind to natural laws... favourable conditions are inevitably going to appear, and... these, in a rather mysterious way, will bring about palingenetic [transformative] events, [so] it is evident that any deliberate initiative tending to predispose and plan these conditions is not only useless but even harmful..." - SPN

"Mass ideological factors always lag behind mass economic phenomena... at certain moments, the automatic thrust due to the economic factor is slowed down, obstructed or even momentarily broken by traditional ideological elements... there must be a conscious, planned struggle to ensure that the exigencies of the economic position of the masses, which may conflict with the traditional leadership's policies, are understood. An appropriate political initiative is always necessary to liberate the economic thrust from the dead weight of traditional policies" - SPN 168