

A not so Brutal Friendship. Italian Responses to National Socialism in Australia

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On 28 October 1932, the Italian Fascist Regime celebrated with great pomp, in Italy and within its Italian migrant communities abroad, the *Decennale*, the tenth anniversary of its seizure of power. Three months later, on 30 January 1933, Chancellor Paul von Hindenburg swore Adolf Hitler as the new Chancellor of Germany, in a «Cabinet of National Concentration». Both Mussolini's *colpo di stato* (*coup d'état*) and Hitler's *Machtergreifung* (seizure of power) had been achieved with the connivance of the countries' ruling *élites* and conservative Establishments.

Following Hitler's rise to power, German diplomatic representatives, in collusion with officers of the German National Socialist Workers' Party (NSDAP) and of the Gestapo in Australia endeavoured to rescue German immigrants to the idea of *Deutschtum*, of belonging to the German nation, through the *Bund*, the Alliance of Germanism in Australia and New Zealand. The *Bund* was officially established on 30 May 1933 and acted as a channel for the permeation of Nazi ideology to German immigrants.

Unlike Nazism in Germany, by 1933 Fascism was firmly entrenched in Italy, having ruthlessly suppressed all organised opposition to its rule. In the following eight years, it intensified its efforts to «nationalise» Italian migrants. The Regime had established a network of associations aimed at bringing Italian migrants under its political control and at spying upon and combating the activities of anti-Fascist Italians. Their programs included the use of propaganda by means of radio, the press, rallies and commemorations. In Australia this network included twenty *Fasci all'Estero* (Fascist Party Branches Abroad), the *Gruppo Giovanile* (Fascist Youth Group), the *Associa-*

zione Nazionale Combattenti (Returned Soldiers National Association), the Italian Army and Navy Union, the *Alpini* National Association, the *Unione Universitaria Italiana* (Italian University Students' Union), the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (National «After Work» Organisation), and the Italian Reserve Officers' Association. Party members were also at the head of Italian clubs, of cultural associations like the Dante Alighieri Society, of the Italian language Press and Italian Shipping Companies.

At first, the Regime looked upon the Führer and his Reich with an ill-disguised sense of superiority. Fascist Italy had been subsidising Nazism, at least by 1932, and during the 'Twenties harboured Nazi leaders in exile, like Hermann Goering¹. Emblematic of this attitude was Mussolini's condescending attitude towards Hitler during their meeting in Venice in June 1934. When, the following month, Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss was murdered by Nazi thugs, an infuriated Mussolini mobilized the Army at the Brenner Pass to thwart any German threat to Austria's independence. Italy's war in Ethiopia and the Axis Alliance brought about a *rapprochement* between the two dictatorships, even if some Italians still subconsciously believed in the civilising influence of «Rome» over her Teutonic neighbour. Franco Battistessa, editorialist of Sydney's pro-Fascist paper *Il Giornale Italiano*, wrote in 1936 that «Rome and Berlin have again stretched the hand to each other... the two modern Caesars, Mussolini the Teacher and his pupil Hitler, will meet again»².

From 1936, Nazi Germany offered a «brutal friendship», to use the expression used retrospectively by Hitler in April 1945³, which would plunge Italy into a tragic, downward spiral of submission to its German master. Its landmarks were the intervention by the two Powers in the Spanish Civil War, the signing of the Axis Alliance on 21 October 1936, Mussolini's visit to Germany in September 1937, Italy signing the Anti-Comintern Pact on 6 November 1937, Hitler's visit to Italy in May 1938, the signing of the Pact of Steel on 7 May 1939, Italy's entry into the conflict on 10 June 1940, the Wehrmacht's occupation of the peninsula following the collapse of the Fascist Regime on 25 July 1943, the war of liberation against the German occupier and its puppet Salò Government and the virtual annexation by the Third Reich of the Italian regions of Trentino and Venezia Giulia, under the *Gauleiters* Franz Hofer and Friedrich Rainer respectively.

In Australia, the relations between Italian and German migrants between 1933 and 1939, during the war years and following the conflict, could not be termed as being brutal, nor altogether friendly. The two communities had settled in Australia since the mid-Nineteenth Century. The first German settlers arrived in South Australia in 1836, while a number of Italian migrants were attracted by the discovery of gold in Victoria during the 1850s. The 1933 Census registered 16,842 persons of German birthplace residing in Australia,

while the Italian-born tallied 26,756⁴. If the second and third generation of Australian-born Italians and Germans are taken into account, during the 1930s people of Italian heritage in Australia totalled 40,000, while people of German heritage were roughly 60,000, although the then German Consul-General, Dr Rudolf Asmis, in a letter to the *Auslandsorganisation*, the Foreign Department of the National Socialist German Workers' Party in Hamburg, claimed that «the Germans in Australia, meaning those persons of German origin in Australia, who still consider themselves of German origin number about 100,000 people»⁵.

While German settlers were mainly concentrated west of Brisbane, in Sydney, Melbourne, Bendigo and Ballarat in Victoria, and in the Barossa Valley in South Australia, the main concentrations of Italians, outside the capital cities, were in the Riverina, Port Pirie in South Australia, Fremantle in Western Australia and the cane fields of North Queensland. To a large extent, therefore, the two communities were not in close proximity. Both communities were watched over by the diplomatic and consular representatives and by members of the local Party organisation, who were at the top of their socio-economic structure. A second tier comprised people involved in business and commerce, staff of the shipping companies and newspapers, executives of cultural associations and clubs, and the very few intellectuals and academics striving to make a living in Australia. The bottom tier included unskilled and semi-skilled workers, agricultural workers, farmers and manual labourers. Italians mainly found employment as cane-cutters, orchardists, shopkeepers, fishermen, stonemasons, fruit growers and pickers. German immigrants, Adelaide's German Consul, Dr Oscar Seger disparagingly lamented, «are simple locksmiths and turners, whom one meets for the sake of *Volksgemeinschaft* (racial community) but whom one naturally differs in thought and subjects of conversation»⁶. In another letter, Seger regretted that «merchants and other circles to whom [*sic*] one can get closer intellectually are lacking. The *Reichsdeutsche* colony consists rather of turners, locksmiths, bakers, the last being for the most part sailors who jumped ship, deserters»⁷.

While the first two tiers were usually pro-Fascist and pro-Nazi, the lower tier was not so committed to the two ideologies. Seger complained that «the more educated – also among the German-Australians – the Freemasons, the German-Lutheran Church circles, are influenced by false newspaper reports, hold back»⁸. A report prepared by the Australian Security Service remarked that at Sydney's German Concordia Club «the members felt in their own quarters that they were the guests of the Nazi tenants... to curb a greater penetration of Nazism into the Club... Hastrich was elected to the presidency»⁹. Another paper on the *Auslandsorganisation*, drafted by Australian Intelligence in 1939, reported that «the present committee... of the German club *Concordia*...

consists of men possessing a strong Australian outlook who would not be easily influenced by official or political parties... It is quite evident that no success has been achieved by the Nazis in respect of this club.... The same condition exists in Melbourne where efforts were made to gain control of the German club *Tivoli*. Old members of the club and some of the young Germans, many of whom have been naturalised, are opposed to Nazism»¹⁰.

More significantly, Rear-Admiral H. E. Menche, who had visited Australia during the 1920s and in 1938 was in charge of Office VIII of the *Auslandsorganisation* in Berlin, responsible for espionage and control over all Nazi branches in the Far East and Australia, stated that «the German clubs in Australia are composed up to 98% of their membership of people of German stock but of Australian nationality. The influence of our Party members is numerically therefore only 1% to 2%»¹¹. Attempts to bolster support for the Nazi cause through the German-language newspaper *Die Brücke* (The Bridge), printed in Sydney, were unsuccessful. Consul-General Asmis wrote in 1936 that «I was appalled by the low number of subscribers; there are only 697 paying yearly subscribers, before we have twice the number it won't pay for itself. Energetic subscribers [*sic*] have so far given but meagre results»¹².

The situation in the Italian community was similar. A statement made in 1939 to the Commonwealth Investigation Branch by Battistessa, whom the Branch described as «an exceedingly well informed man, probably trying to sit on both sides of the fence», pointed out that «Fascism is more a phantom than a reality... The Italian settlers are fully 95% raw, illiterate peasants from rural Italy, and to the great majority of them Fascism is a mere word and they are not in a position to grasp its meaning or political philosophy. Only 6% of the Italians in Australia are registered Fascists, about 960 in all throughout the Commonwealth; of these merely 10% are genuine Fascists by conviction and ex militants from Italy, 15% are merely opportunists who joined up for fear or in the hope of material advantages, while the remaining 75% have linked up with Fascism for sentimental reasons and in sympathy with the movement which they sincerely believe has regenerated Italy»¹³.

In an attempt to overcome the manifest resistance among German and Italian migrants to embrace the ideology of the two Regimes, the diplomatic representatives of Italy and Germany in Australia set up not only a network of associations aimed at capturing the consensus of their nationals, but also at spying upon them. Beside the Italian organizations already mentioned, the Fascist Regime controlled the actions of its nationals through a network of informers who reported to the consular authorities, and information gathered was relayed to Rome for appropriate action¹⁴. Military Intelligence was also aware that, «with regard to Fascist organisations in Australia, information in this office indicates that the DGIE (*Direzione Generale degli Italiani all'Estero*) and the

OVRA (*Opera Volontaria Repressione Antifascismo*) function under an official who is located at the Italian Consulate-General in Sydney... It is part of an Italian Consul's duty to organise and control intelligence work in his area»¹⁵.

With regard to the German community in Australia, this supervisory role was performed by the Gestapo, working through the *Auslandsorganisation*, with its officers operating under cover of consular positions. In Sydney, Military Intelligence identified the Consulate-General's Assistant Secretary, Alfred Henschel, as a member of Himmler's organisation. Henschel, a graduate of the Nazi Propaganda College, «travelled all over Australia on a purely police mission checking the activities of local Nazi branches, individual Nazis and Nazi sympathisers»¹⁶. Others suspected of being Gestapo agents were Fritz Müller, Herbert Englebert Hardt, Dr. Gerhard Neumann, Leo Weyers, Counsellor at Sydney's Consulate-General, and W. Heiler. In Melbourne, Dr Meister, member of the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (German Labour Front) and connected with the German Ministry of Economics was a possible agent¹⁷, while the resident Gestapo man at the Consulate was its Secretary, Wopker¹⁸. Military Intelligence commented that «the appointment of Wopker as Consular Secretary instilled new activity into the dormant German Consulate»¹⁹.

A more secretive espionage network set up in Australia in May 1935 by the *Abwehr Abteilung* (Military Intelligence Section) under Admiral Wilhelm Canaris was the *Etappenorganisation* (Stations Organisation). The agents of this organisation were mainly reliable German businessmen and shipping agents. They had to be well established in their business and respected by the Australian community. Their duty in time of peace was to prepare for work in case of war and to report on information of outstanding importance and on naval movements. *Etappenorganisation* agents in Australia were Josef Jansen, using the cover name of Kent Howard, an employee of Mercantile Traders in Perth, and the Australian representative of the Norddeutscher Lloyd, Eugen Mertgen (cover name John Anderson), who in October 1933 was replaced by Eugen Mathy, operating under the same cover name and working for the shipping agents, Gilchrist Watt & Sanderson in Sydney. Herbert Hardt, the principal of Sydney's Import-Export firm G. Hardt & Co., Vice-President of the German-Australian Chamber of Commerce, a Director of *Die Brücke* and Economic Leader of the NSDAP in Australia, enjoyed the confidence of Rear-Admiral Menche, and in July 1938 returned to Germany, to be appointed *Etappen* agent to Holland. The Australian Security Service reported to its counterpart in the United Kingdom that «it has been established beyond reasonable doubt that Hardt was formerly a member of Himmler's SS, the Corps d'Elite of the Nazi Party with its own Intelligence Services»²⁰, that is, the *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security Service).

Unlike under Fascist Italy's system, where its diplomatic representatives had ultimate authority over the Party hierarchy, for the German Government the head of the NSDAP in Australia had precedence over the Consul-General. From April 1936 to June 1939 the *Landeskreisleiter* (District Leader) in Australia was Walter Ladendorff, who had taken over the previous leaders, Johannes Frerck and Dr Johannes Becker²¹, and would be replaced by Waldemar Weber. A memorable and telling incident occurred when the representative of the German Government had to be presented to the Governor of New South Wales. Ladendorff pushed past Consul-General Asmis and was formally introduced to the Governor. Afterwards he openly boasted of his precedence over the diplomatic representative²². Asmis had many enemies within the Nazi Party, who looked upon him as a snob and were continually working to have him recalled to Germany to be replaced by a man of «more modern National Socialist outlook».

Despite these slurs and his subordinate role to the Party representative, Consul-General Rudolf Asmis, who had taken office on 5 July 1932, endeavoured to serve his new political masters faithfully. A fluent speaker and a good organiser, a monarchist at heart, married to the daughter of an ex-State Councillor of Tsarist Russia, only in 1938 Asmis regretfully became a member of the Party. As he put it, «On the request of the party's District Leader for Australia, I joined the NSDAP»²³. On 30 May 1933, Asmis formed the *Alliance of Germanism in Australia and New Zealand*. The Alliance, or *Bund*, aimed at re-awakening German self-consciousness. On 10 April 1934, the first meeting of the National Socialist German Workers' Party in New South Wales was held in Sydney. By 1939, the Party membership would reach approximately 170²⁴. Similarly, the Italian authorities strove to «nationalise» the Italian peasant immigrants, but with no greater success than their German counterparts²⁵. Despite the ideological affinity between the two dictatorships and the capillary organisation built by both Governments in Australia to control their nationals, it is, at first sight, surprising that there was no common strategy, no planned course of action, no sharing of intelligence information between the local officers of the Axis Powers. Only irregular, perfunctory meetings took place between the diplomatic representatives, the intelligence officers, the Party leaders, the Club managers, the newspaper editors, the business *élite*, the members of social, sporting, educational and recreational associations of the German and Italian communities.

There were several reasons militating against a close relationship between Italians and Germans in Australia. In the first place, the mythology and the rhetoric surrounding the Unification of Italy rested on stereotypes describing the Germans as «the invading barbarian», the «century-old enemy», and the «hated German». Even as late as 1943, King Victor Emmanuel III, speaking about the Germans, reminded Italians of the «inhuman enemy of our race and

our civilisation»²⁶. These feelings ran deep into the national Italian psyche. More importantly, many Italian migrants during the First World War had fought on the Isonzo front against the Austrians, and in 1917 had been routed at Caporetto by General Otto von Below's 14th German Army. Many migrants had not forgotten the harrowing experience of running for their life in front of the advancing Germans. The obvious language barrier, the geographic separation between the two communities, the social, educational and economic differences, were all factors that hindered contacts and collaboration. Italian migrants could also hardly understand the Nazi anti-Jewish campaign and felt uneasy, at least until 1938, in lending their support to it. This estrangement was reflected in the pro-Fascist Italian Press in Australia, the *Giornale Italiano*, edited by Filippo Maria Bianchi, the *Corriere degli Italiani in Australia*, edited by Felice Rando, the *Italo-Australian*, edited by Fortunato La Rosa, and the *Italian Bulletin of Australia*, edited by Luigi Gariglio. These papers, although regularly reporting news of Italo-German relations, seldom mentioned German political and social activities in Australia. Only after 1938 did these papers report some events concerning Germans in Australia²⁷.

Similarly, *Die Brücke* also neglected to account for Italian events in this country. Former German soldiers emigrated to Australia had not forgotten, nor forgiven, the Italian «betrayal» during the First World War, when Italy reneged on her obligations under the Triple Alliance and entered the conflict on the Allied side. They maintained, like their co-nationals in Germany, a marked sense of racial superiority over the «inferior Latin race». Melbourne's last Fascist Consul, Mario Lucioli, in his book *Mussolini e l'Europa*, published in 1945 under the pseudonym of Mario Donosti, recounts that, when Italian workers in Germany were warned not to frequent German women in order to avoid «racial inconvenience», Foreign Minister Joachim Ribbentrop confirmed that it was official German policy to avoid «irreparable damage to the German race». Lucioli made the point that, even during the Ethiopian campaign, when the League of Nations imposed economic sanctions against the Fascist Regime, «Germany maintained an extremely cold attitude towards Italy, meanly speculating over her situation by selling at an inflated price what Italy needed most and pretending to be paid immediately and in hard cash»²⁸.

It was at the time of the Ethiopian war that Australian Intelligence turned its attention on the possible combined security threat constituted by Italian Fascists and German Nazis in Australia, discovering that «only after the outbreak of the Italo-Abyssinian war Nazis were instructed to seek closer relations with the Fascist Party. The Italians arranged entertainments and showed pictures on board Italian steamers»²⁹. However, many Germans were unwilling to obey such an order. When, in December 1935, Antonio Baccarini, President of the Dante Alighieri Society in Sydney and a staunch Fascist, pro-

posed to the German Consulate-General a plan for collaboration with the German Circle and the publication of a monthly paper, Counsellor Werz curtly replied «Herr Baccarini that the suggested collaboration would be of no interest to us»³⁰. Undaunted by the setback, in October 1937 Baccarini wrote to Asmis, putting forward the idea of establishing a «Circle for Culture and Language» and asking for a German representative, «conversant with the modern trend of German culture», to sit on its board. Again, his offer of collaboration was curtly rejected³¹.

German contempt toward Italians was fuelled by the sight of Italians, in the presence of their diplomatic and Party representatives, not missing an opportunity for celebrating their military deeds against the Austrians and the Germans in World War I, be their entry into the conflict, their offensive on the Piave river or their victory on 4 November 1918. Ceremonies were held to commemorate Francesco Baracca, the Italian ace who shot down 34 Austrian aircraft before being himself downed, on 19 June 1918. Every year Italian returned soldiers marched, giving the Fascist salute, on Anzac Day. On 25 April 1939, even Consul-General Mammalella paraded with them in Sydney³². In February 1938, the *Giornale Italiano* began serialising an article on «The bravery of the Italian soldier in the Great War»³³.

To some extent, it is difficult to ascertain the degree of collaboration between Fascists and Nazis in Australia, or the extent of their espionage activities, because most of the records were destroyed. Consul Luciulli makes mention in his memoirs of «collecting [on 11 June 1940, *n.d.a.*] the few confidential documents not yet destroyed and burning them in the garden, where we had already burned the others»³⁴. On the same day, Felice Rando, Inspector-General of Fascist Branches in Australasia, destroyed in Sydney the records of the *Fascio Luigi Platania*³⁵. Likewise, Dr Johannes Becker, the former Party *Landeskreisleiter* for Australia, declared that just after the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, he burned 48 files, each one and a quarter inch thick, which pertained to the activities of the NSDAP in Australia³⁶. This destruction of compromising evidence was also carried out in Germany. At the end of the Second World War, Australia's Director-General of Security sent an agent to Europe in June 1945, to investigate on Nazi and Fascist activities in Australia, since the Allies had captured 50 to 60 truckloads of *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office) documents, weighing from 500 to 1,000 tons, and were examining them at the University of Marburg. The officer interrogated the former Head of the *Auslandsorganisation*, *Gauleiter* Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, who stated that all *Auslandsorganisation* records were evacuated to Bad Schandau in Saxony and that, as far as he knew, they were destroyed on the approach of Allied troops³⁷. The same officer made enquiries also in London «as to whether any documents had been found in Italy which would throw further light on Italian Fas-

cist activities in Australia. I was subsequently informed that no documents whatever of this nature had been found»³⁸. Only the Italian consular records in Adelaide were seized by the Security Service, «in view of the lax office methods of the Consular Agent... Signor Amerio, [who] apparently had no idea of office routine». To compound on the shambolic state of Amerio's papers, Adelaide's Intelligence staff faced the problem of having to urgently appraise their content, and «an effort was made by the one Italian interpreter available to this Security Service to cope with the vast volume of translation»³⁹.

A reluctance to establish a closer relationship with their German colleagues was also manifest in the attitudes of some Italian diplomats. Consul-General Paolo Vita-Finzi, who had taken up duty on 25 November 1935, was recalled to Rome on 22 February 1937 because of his Jewish extraction. During his stay in Australia he was, understandably, not sympathetic to the racial utterances of the local Reich's representatives. In 1938 Vita-Finzi took refuge in Argentina with his wife and Australian-born son. In his memoirs, published in 1989⁴⁰, he does not make mention of social contacts or even consular meetings with Asmis or other members of the German community. His successor, Amedeo Mammalella, was a Neapolitan of great culture and intelligence, a convinced Fascist who had taken part in the March on Rome. However, according to his colleague in Melbourne, Mario Lucioli, he was «the wrong man in the wrong place, since he could not speak a word of English and... was always going around escorted by an employee, by the name of Chieffi, who... spoke English well, but unfortunately stuttered. So, official Italy was represented in Sydney by this inseparable couple, who were communicating in Neapolitan dialect, accompanied by constant gesticulating and followed by syncopated English»⁴¹.

However, despite Mammalella's shortcomings, following his appointment, contacts with the German authorities and the community became more frequent. Mammalella used to meet some of the Nazi leadership on neutral ground, at the home of Dr E. Haslett Frazer at Darling Point. Dr Frazer lived with an Italian lady and was outspokenly pro-Nazi and pro-Fascist. On 8 August 1938, Italian films were screened at the Concordia Club in Sydney, while on 22 November 1938 Fascist films were shown on board the MV *Viminale*. The Commonwealth Investigation Branch reported that «Ladendorff, Dr Asmis, W. Schumacher, A. Von Skerst and H. Dannenberg attended an exhibition of moving pictures... featuring Hitler's visit to Rome and Mussolini's visit to Berlin, and the Army, Navy and Air Force reviews associated with them. When these pictures were being shown to passengers on the outward voyage, all passengers left the hall, and refused to patronise them. Ladendorff was so impressed with the pictures, that he secured them from the Italians and they were exclusively shown at the German Club on 8 December to NSDAP members»⁴².

On 16 February 1939, the Italian Club in Melbourne showed films to its German guests. On that occasion, the Consulate's Secretary, Wopker, addressed the meeting in Italian⁴³. According to the Security Service, «in Melbourne the liaison between the local Nazis and the Italian Fascists was maintained through the Secretary of the local German Consulate, Mr Wopker... It is only natural to presume that Wopker held credentials from Himmler's Gestapo. He was certainly treated with much consideration by the local Nazis, whose group meetings he attended, while *Die Brücke* received the friendly "hint" from his Nazi principals that reports sent from Melbourne, in which Wopker's name was mentioned, should be printed unabridged. Wopker spoke Italian fluently, and at functions arranged by the Melbourne Italian Fascists in honour of their German allies, he addressed them in their native language»⁴⁴.

Fascist Italy's 1938 racial laws, modelled on Nazi legislation, offended some Fascists in Australia. Woolbuyer Giovanni Gremmo, with the wisdom of hindsight, declared in 1941 that, «personally, I have always believed that there can be no real affinity between the Latin and the German peoples... When I learned that anti-Semitism was being practised in Italy, I was very disappointed. It was then, for the first time, that I understood that the political alliance with Germany was acquiring a really deep meaning»⁴⁵. Even an unrepentant Fascist like Battistessa saw the darker implications for Fascist Italy's blindly following its ideological mentor. In an editorial with the title «Sympathy for the Jews» printed in *Il Giornale Italiano* on 30 November 1938, he stated in reaction to *Kristallnacht* that «non-Jewish people... will at once form the conclusion that, if Germany treats her Jews with such relentless truculence, Germany will treat all her other underlings similarly... Italians sympathise with the Jews and fall into line with the wave of resentment their treatment by Germany has evoked throughout the world»⁴⁶. Some other Fascists were not so bold and toed the Party line. Luigi Gariglio wrote in the February 1939 issue of the *Italian Bulletin of Australia*, organ of the Italian Chamber of Commerce of Australia, that «Italy's relations with Germany during the last ten years had been correct and friendly, but they only became intimate as a result of the Ethiopian campaign when Italy, in its conflict with Great Britain and other League Powers, found cordial support in Germany. Mussolini and Hitler had much in common, having had to face many of the same problems. But owing to the Führer's uncompromising anti-Semitism, the Jews of Italy, as of other countries, were bitterly opposed to Nazi Germany and therefore disapproved of Italy's intimacy with that power»⁴⁷.

However, the strongest connection between the Nazis and Italian Fascists was maintained through German and Italian woolbuyers. German woolbuyers, of whom there were forty five in Sydney alone, were the backbone of the Nazi Party in Australia, were well organised and rallied, when called upon, to

all Party functions and meetings, where their presence was required. They were not popular with some of the Concordia Club members, owing to the fact that the woolbuyers lived a higher social life and only appeared at the Club when the NSDAP commanded their presence. German woolbuyers induced the Italian Shipping Line to advertise regularly in *Die Brücke*, and one of the largest woolbuying firms, Simonius, Visher & Co., placed advertisements in the *Illustrated Annual of Il Giornale Italiano*⁴⁸. Simonius, Visher & Co. was a Swiss concern. However, during the Depression, some of its German clients went bankrupt and Simonius Visher took over their interests. According to Australian Intelligence, the company was staffed by German Nazis. Visiting German ships' captains entertained wealthy woolbuyers, irrespective of nationality, as well as Party members and officials from German clubs⁴⁹. A report compiled by internee Arnold von Skerst for the Security Service in 1943 stated that the German woolbuyers were the *élite* of the German business community, financially the strongest group. «They more or less looked down upon the less prosperous and consequently did not cut much ice with many of the Nazi militants belonging to the working classes... It is possible to assert», claimed von Skerst, «that the whole Nazi movement and Nazi propaganda in this country was mainly financed out of monies in one way or another provided by the German woolbuyers». It was through them that a personal contact was maintained with Party Headquarters in Germany. After 1939, following their internment, they «became bitter and antagonistic to Australia, only dreaming of a German victory and world domination»⁵⁰.

Like their German colleagues, Italian woolbuyers also held official positions in Fascist organisations in Australia. As Arnold von Skerst quipped, «even commerce today commands politics»⁵¹. Nino Gremmo, a German-speaking woolbuyer who had taken part in the Fascist March on Rome, was employed by Simonius Visher until December 1938, and later by Boggio & Ricaldone, one of the leading wool firms in Vienna. Gremmo was also President of Sydney's *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro*, while Pino Boggio, of Boggio & Ricaldone, was Assistant Editor of *Il Giornale Italiano*. Another woolbuyer, Virgilio Zatta, in 1939 was President of the Club Italia. Yet another ardent Fascist, Giuseppe Guzzoni, was President of the *Società Laniera Italiana* (Italian Wool-Trading Society). One of the leading Italian importers and an avowed Fascist, Luigi Gariglio, was also a leading member of the Club Italia. Gremmo, Boggio, Zatta, De Pietro, Bozzale, Guzzoni, Gariglio and other Italian woolbuyers, all members of Sydney's *Fascio Luigi Platania*, would frequent the Exchange Hotel at the corner of Pitt and Bridge Streets, the regular drinking place of Sydney's German community. When questioned by the Alien Tribunal in 1941, Gremmo, whose wife's maiden name was Windgaertner, admitted having patronised the German Club in Brisbane and

the Exchange Hotel and being on friendly terms with the Simonius Visser woolbuyers and NSDAP members, Joseph Wolfgarten and Wilhelm Dannenberg, the latter also being a member of the inner Party ring⁵².

Von Skerst claimed that German woolbuyers «on their air-travel between Sydney and Brisbane... have taken aerial photos of the coastal district overflown»⁵³. It is difficult to assess the security threat that German Nazis and their Fascist comrades represented for Australia. In 1938, British Security, in reviewing the activities of Italian Fascists in the United Kingdom, warned the Australian Security Service that, «while the Italian Fascist organization is perhaps run on less methodical lines than its German counterpart it is obvious that it does also provide the Italian Government with ready made machinery for dangerous action in British countries in an emergency. If less methodical in detail the Italian Regime has the advantage of being more mature; and its leading official posts – such as those at the Embassy – are held by prominent Fascists»⁵⁴.

The Commonwealth Investigation Branch was aware of the threat. It had infiltrated agents and informers into both communities. Military Intelligence came in possession of a secret Fascist memorandum, issued in July 1939, instructing Party members how to covertly carry out political activities. This «authentic information» was obtained from a source «which cannot be disclosed»⁵⁵. Another agent had access to the records of secret meetings of the Sydney Branch of the NSDAP. The minutes, written by Arnold von Skerst, were drafted only in duplicate, one copy for the German Consulate-General and the other for Berlin, sent home on a German freighter. However, «information was obtained [for Australian Intelligence] from a person who was in the position, at the time, to peruse copies of the minutes»⁵⁶. A Security report on Gestapo agent Henschel stated that «information [was obtained] from agent within German circles, Melbourne» and that «information is confidential. A leakage in this regard would be the means of drying up my source of information»⁵⁷. At times, the Investigation Branch adopted dubious methods in order to penetrate the Nazi network. In June 1939, Inspector D.R.B. Mitchell of the CIB entertained Ladendorff at dinner and had a friendly «chit chat» with him, asking him to supply him a list of Nazi Party members. Mitchell concluded the report to his superior by naively stating that «I think that this Office is in the position of being able to get reliable information from the Nazi Party, but, of course, such information has to be checked. Still, it is of great assistance... to be able to go direct to the local headquarters and obtain information. This position has been achieved by careful and tactful handling of the people concerned, as opposed to making devious enquiries which are sure to leak back to the people enquired about»⁵⁸. A few weeks later, he was sadly disappointed when the Station Head of the Gestapo, Henschel, bluntly told him that «neither I nor any other Party comrade were justi-

fied in handing the list of members to anybody». Henschel's account of the meeting to the *Auslandsorganisation* in Berlin was, according to the Australian translator, «particularly arrogant» towards Mitchell⁵⁹.

In addition to Ladendorff, quite a few other Nazi executives belonging to his intimate circle seemed to be known to Italian Fascist leaders, and were feted accordingly. Among them were Hermann Junge, Treasurer of the Winter Help Fund; Hermann Schuetze, Treasurer and Secretary of the Party; Fritz Müller, Secretary of the German Workers' Front (DAF); and Captain Robert Köhler, Director of German Australian Publications Ltd. and a World War I hero, who was famed for being a World War I hero when, as Commander of U-boat 151, he was alleged having sank 81 Allied ships, although historian Barbara Poniewierski refuted his claim⁶⁰. Köhler, who was also the resident representative of the Hamburg-America Line, was the contact for Louis Burkard, former President of the German Chamber of Commerce in Sydney, posted to Noumea where, assisted by an engineer from Krupp, he bought chrome and nickel ore (and looked for titanium) and shipped it to the German armaments industry⁶¹.

The Italian business *élite* in Australia was not so rich and enterprising as the German one. It consisted of a small group of old-time migrants who had been financially successful, like the importer of foodstuff Bartolomeo Callose; Pietro Melocco, owner of Melocco Bros., supplying terrazzo and marble works; Matteo Fiorelli, wine merchant; Antonio Despas of Cinzano (Aust) Ltd, wine merchants; Francesco Lubrano, shipping agent and owner of the *Italo-Australian*; Luigi Gariglio, involved in import-export with Italy; Gualtiero Vaccari, who in 1921 had founded G. Vaccari & Co., an agency for such well-known Italian companies as FIAT, Snia Viscosa and Manifatture Cotoniere Meridionali, and importing synthetic fibres, ball and roller-bearings and cotton goods. Also influential were the dozen Italian woolbuyers and the representatives of the Australia-Italia Shipping Line, Icilio Fanelli, and of the Lloyd Triestino Line, Filiberto Quaglia. For business reasons and out of conviction, they were closely associated with the local Fascist organizations and with consular officials.

On the contrary, the managers and employees of German companies operating in Australia, among them Krupp, AEG, Bayer, Siemens, Leicagraph and IG Farben, were the spearhead of Nazi penetration. They were staunch National Socialists and worked in collaboration with the German Commercial Attaché and the German Chamber of Commerce, and controlled practically all trade to and from Germany. They distributed propaganda material, were heavily involved in commercial espionage, laundered money coming from Germany to finance subversive activities, and company staff, despatched from Germany to work in Australia, were in fact Nazi agents. They constituted a powerful group and had considerable economic clout. For instance, when Consul-General Asmis, before leaving for Germany, on 23 February 1939 gave a farewell party

on board the S. S. *Alster*, his 194 guests were the cream of German business in Australia. Not a single Italian was invited to the reception⁶².

By reason of their successful penetration into the Australian business world, some German businessmen secured contracts that would give them the opportunity to commit acts of sabotage. For instance, Waldemar Weber, *Ortsgruppenleiter* of the NSDAP in Sydney, who had joined the Party in Germany on 1 March 1933 and had his membership card personally signed by Hitler, installed on behalf of AEG a considerable amount of plant at Bunnerong Power Station, using German technicians. He was the holder of a gate pass that entitled him and his staff to enter the Power Station any time day or night⁶³. Australian Intelligence believed that Italian fishermen and market gardeners, living and working near water pipe lines, shipyards and oil depots had ample opportunity to sabotage these plants. «At the present time», the Service wrote in 1940, «when war is probable between England and Italy, the first consideration of practically all Italians in New South Wales is their business. Many own their business and is [*sic*], in most cases, the fulfilment of a hard struggle. War to these Italians means ruin and with their life's work destroyed in a night, a great bitterness at what would appear to them an injustice may flare up in the hearts of this impulsive race, and a national characteristic – Revenge – take control of their reason. In these circumstances the Italians are likely to resort to sabotage»⁶⁴.

Already in 1938 the Australian Government had been alerted by British Intelligence as to the possibility of Italian Fascist organisations engaging in subversive activities in Australia. «There is reliable information», warned London, «to show that the *Fasci all'Ester* under Parini are organised in such a way as to enable the Italian Government to employ them for sabotage purposes, and it is known that the intention to employ them for sabotage purposes against British aerodromes existed at the time of the war in Abyssinia»⁶⁵. Despite the Service's concerns over Fifth Column activities, Germans and Italians were not involved in sabotage⁶⁶ and a large number of them and their Nazi and Fascist leaders, after September 1939 and June 1940, were meekly herded to the internment camps.

While in custody, Italians were questioned on their attitude towards their Nazi colleagues and their liaison with them. As Southern Italians were considered an inferior race by the Nazis, and as Southern Italy by 1943 had been «liberated» by the Allies, Australian Security hoped that «some of them, particularly the Sicilians and the Calabrians, might be prepared to assist on supplying information about Nazis in Australia with which we were not previously familiar»⁶⁷. On 5 November 1943, seven of the most prominent Fascists were interviewed at the Loveday camp in South Australia. Although their testimony invariably aimed at minimising their involvement in Fascist

activities, it was nevertheless indicative of their mistrust of their German ally. Battistessa, a «Fascist of the First Hour», his November 1920 Party card no. 24 signed by future *Quadrumvir* Emilio De Bono, vouched that «there was no co-operation here between Fascism and Nazism... there was no exchange of courtesy or meetings. We ignored each other... I never published news of reciprocal gatherings. Not in my 15 years in Australia... The Consuls were always very friendly». The interviewing officer, Captain Sexton, commented that «this internee is an elderly, smooth-tongued journalist, and appears to intentionally run with the hare and hunt with the hounds... unprincipled and unreliable... but regarding Nazi-Fascist liaison he appears to have genuinely given all the information available». Another internee being questioned was Captain Filiberto Quaglia, Brisbane's representative of the Lloyd Triestino Line. In his testimonial, he said: «I do not remember the Nazi Party approaching the *Fascio* in Brisbane for social functions. I never heard that the friends of the Third Reich German Club, or members of the Nazi Party in Brisbane had tried to ally themselves with the Fascist Party... I have never been particularly fond of Germans»⁶⁸.

Internee Ginese Triaca had been Secretary of Melbourne's *Fascio Gino Lisa*. A Captain in the Italian Army, Triaca had served against the Austrians in World War I. He declared to Captain Sexton that «some Italians were invited to the German Club one night when there was a big ball. The German Consul was there. At the time that I was Secretary for the *Fascio* in Melbourne there was never any contact between the two parties... In 1937... I resigned from the secretaryship... I felt the Italian Government had gone too much towards the Germans. The Italian people did not like the Germans. Neither did my family»⁶⁹.

The fourth internee interviewed was former Melbourne's *Fascio* Secretary following Triaca's resignation, Mario Speirani. He testified that «I had nothing to do with the German Consul. In 1937, we had a Consul Arrighi who was very friendly with the German Consul... We were all invited as part of the Italian community to a reception at the German Club, a concert and dance, then later we returned this function. The Fascist Party had nothing to do with the Nazi Party... There were never any orders from the Consul re. the German people. Not even when Germany and Italy made the [Axis] Pact. There was no celebration... I remember von Luckner when he came to Melbourne, but he was not entertained by the Fascists».

The sub-editor of *Il Giornale Italiano* and woolbuyer Pino Boggio, was next to be questioned. He similarly maintained that he was not aware of any affiliation between the Nazi and Fascist Parties in Australia, as did journalist Antonio Giordano, who pointed out that «the German Consul did not meet any Italians there [in Sydney], other than Dr Fanelli [Icilio Fanelli, Manager of the Australia-Italia Shipping Line and Secretary of Sydney's *Fascio*]... I

have never been to German clubs». Giordano explained the estrangement of the two communities by the fact that «Italians were working people, and the Germans were professional men – woolbuyers – they could have nothing in common». The last interviewee was Filippo Maria Bianchi. An Artillery Officer during the First World War, Bianchi, an educated man, editor of *Il Giornale Italiano*, spoke German and had pro-Nazi sympathies. He admitted that «Nazi influence may have been used on members of the Fascist Party».

In assessing the interviews carried out by Captain Sexton, the Deputy-Director of Security, South Australia drew the conclusion that «there was no active liaison with the Nazis and Fascists and only on a few occasions were arrangements made for reciprocal gatherings by the different Consulates. From various conversations with Germans of pro-Nazi leanings», continued the Deputy-Director, «I think it can be safely assumed that the attitude of the German communities towards the Italians in general has been much the same as has been generally assumed, namely one of disdain»⁷⁰.

It is worth noting that, if German attitudes towards Italians in Australia were disdainful (reciprocated by the Italians with deep resentment and atavist suspicion), their policy towards their Japanese allies was utterly racist. In a document published by the German Foreign Institute in Stuttgart in July 1942, under the title *Die Volksdeutsche Gruppe in Australien* (The German Community in Australia), the question of the fate of the German communities in Australia after a Japanese victory was discussed. The author stated that it would be impossible to leave a German group in the control of a yellow race, and that the only solution would be the removal of the whole group to Tasmania, after having forcibly transferred its 230,000 inhabitants to the mainland. Alternatively, the Australian *Deutschtum* should be transported to Europe, to be settled there within the framework of the Greater German Reich⁷¹. Although no mention is being made of Italians in German document, one suspects that they did not fare better in the plans of the proponents of the master race. Hitler himself endorsed this policy. In 1941, his view, recorded in his *Table Talk*, was that «the Japanese are occupying all the islands, one after the other. They will get hold of Australia, too. The white race will disappear from those regions»⁷².

German attitudes towards Italians in part explain why most of the prominent Fascists in Australia were also contrary to a closer relationship with Nazi Germany. Luigi Gariglio, President of the Italian Chamber of Commerce, who had served with the Italian Army in 1918, during the review of his case by the Aliens Tribunal in 1941, declared that «I am not in favour of any political question bringing Italy alongside Germany»⁷³. Similarly, Prince Alfonso Del Drago, President of the Italian Returned Soldiers' Association, who fought with the Allies against the Austrians from 1915 to 1918, while in internment at Murchison, Victoria, stated in 1943 that «he had wanted Italy to

win the war, but never wished Germany or Japan to share the victory»⁷⁴. Lamberto Yonna, Secretary of the Italian Chamber of Commerce and a returned soldier from the Italian Front, also did not hide his dislike for the Germans during questioning by the Aliens Tribunal. Speaking about the Axis, he said: «so far as the Germans were concerned... I do not think that out of 100 [people] there are 5 in my town that have any feelings of admiration for this very opportunist friendship of today»⁷⁵.

However, not all Italian Fascists were antagonistic to the German alliance. Sir Raphael Cilento, President of Brisbane's Dante Alighieri Society and a German-speaker, was described in 1937 by a German corresponding with Consul-General Asmis from Rabaul as «an old friend of ours... a great diplomat and a very clever man and was friendly towards us through all times, also during the war... he has given preference to German medicines whenever possible»⁷⁶, to which Asmis replied that «it will be a special pleasure for me to meet Sir Raphael Cilento and to hear from him about New Guinea. I will invite him to lunch or dinner during his stay here»⁷⁷. Cilento was the only Italian name recorded in the address book of Walter Schumacher, Treasurer of Sydney's Winter Help Fund and frequent visitor to the Exchange Hotel⁷⁸. Also, Cilento was the only Italian among the 500 dignitaries reported in *Die Brücke* attending Count Felix von Luckner's talk at the *Deutscher Turnverein* (German Gymnastics Club)⁷⁹.

Another person closely associated with the Nazi hierarchy in Australia was Filippo Maria Bianchi, editor of *Il Giornale Italiano*. When, in June 1940, he was brought to the Tatura internment camp, he was greeted by the «leading interned Nazis as a dear old friend, and immediately admitted into the inner ring running and controlling the camp»⁸⁰. While in internment, he continued, in the words of the Army Censor, «to show pro-Fascist and pro-Nazi sympathies»⁸¹, and in November 1940 a letter in German was found in his possession, presumably drafted by him. Its translation read: «German Comrades! For us, members of the [Fascist] Party, it is a great honour to have so many Germans comrades with us today when we are celebrating today the March on Rome (check quotation). On this day a new era begun for our country. The seed was sown out of which the friendship between our Nations begun. This friendship is decisive for the present as well as our future. This celebration in a camp, therefore, has for us a great meaning. German comrades, I thank you in the name of my comrades for your presence. In remembrance of our mutual imprisonment in Australia and much pleasure, much anger, and much pride»⁸². At the end of the conflict, the Director of the Commonwealth Investigation Service concluded that Bianchi's «pre-war activities indicate that he clearly abused Australian hospitality»⁸³.

While in internment during the Second World War, both Nazis and Fascists continued their propaganda activities and took control of the camps and their

inmates. Arthur Wolf, then Deputy Leader of the NSDAP for Australia, in 1942 encouraged his followers to «maintain faithful obedience and discipline in the dark days which approach»⁸⁴. Military Intelligence reported that «the ardent Nazis at the [Tatura] Internment Camp endeavour to inculcate the principles of Nazi ideology on new arrivals... Lectures on National Socialism are frequently given inside the Internment Camp by Waldemar Weber and Dr Franz Haslinger... Köhler and Weber have a large following in the camp»⁸⁵. The same situation prevailed in the Italian camps. Woolbuyer Virgilio Zatta took over from Prince del Drago as camp leader at Murchison in 1941. Del Drago «wore his Fascist badges, made a speech celebrating the March on Rome and told the internees not to believe what they read in the Australian newspapers. Captain Filiberto Quaglia, who also wore a Fascist badge, made a speech... Fanelli, wearing a Fascist badge, also made a speech about Mussolini's great work»⁸⁶.

Antonio Baccarini, whose name before the war appeared on the list of people associated with the German Consulate-General, upon his release from internment in 1944, was seen by Military Intelligence «giving the Fascist salute many times when bidding farewell to his fellow internees, and is no doubt a “red hot” Fascist»⁸⁷. Violence against lukewarm supporters (indicted by an Italian Fascist as «traitors twice over – in the front line and in the P.O.W. camps, Bedouins, Arabs, flag-swappers»), sabotage of farm machinery and insubordination were common among German and Italian supporters of the Fascist regimes. Not even the impending defeat shook in some their faith in the Axis cause. When, in November 1944, at Cowra camp an internee was asked who were his Allies, the British or the Germans, he sprang to attention and said «I enlisted under Benito Mussolini and I believe only in Rome, Tokyo and Berlin. Previously I was a good Fascist and a modest sailor, now I am a modest sailor and a good Fascist»⁸⁸. By March 1944, enemy aliens interned in Australia included 4,727 Italians (31.71% of the total Italian male population), 1,115 Germans (32.04%), 90 Austrians (6.45%), 42 Rumanians (24.70%) and 587 Japanese (97.83%)⁸⁹.

For many Nazis and Fascists in Australia, the war had been a national as well as a personal catastrophe. Alfred Henschel was killed in action⁹⁰, Arnold von Skerst committed suicide in Sydney in December 1948⁹¹, Consul Oscar Seger in 1947 was in Soviet hands, «being drafted by the Russians into some form of service» and by 1949 was believed dead⁹². The fate of Consul-General Rudolf Asmis was equally tragic. On 17 June 1945, Asmis, whom Australian Intelligence found «did not exactly confine his activities to his Consular position»⁹³, was arrested by the Soviet occupation forces in his flat at Klein-Machnow near Berlin, charged with espionage, sentenced to 25 years hard labour and deported to the Ussr. During the years 1922 to 1924, Asmis had been Counsellor of the German Embassy in Moscow. At that time, he had

undertaken a trip through the Soviet Union, interpreted by the Soviet Government as espionage⁹⁴. He was reported by the Soviet authorities to have died in November 1945 at the Vorkuta labour camp, in Siberia⁹⁵.

Other Nazi and Fascist leaders were more fortunate. Walter Ladendorff, the *Landeskreisleiter* for Australia, upon his return to Germany in 1939 served in the Army, was wounded and discharged. In November 1943, he was posted as Rural Group Leader to Denmark, and in December 1944 was put in charge by Bohle on work connected with German refugees from East Prussia. In 1945, Ladendorff was located at Copenhagen, working in the Civilian Interrogation Centre as an interpreter for the British⁹⁶. The woolbuyer Heinrich Dannenberg, who had joined the NSDAP in 1935 and was the Party's film warden, upon his release from internment went back to work for the firm Simoniush Visher because, as he put it, «he would be sure of three meals a day, not so in Germany... His political views», commented Military Intelligence, «have not been made manifest, but he has been on good terms with the ruling element in the compound»⁹⁷. By December 1947, he was in Brisbane, operating at the wool sales. His presence caused dismay among Australian wool valuers, who threatened to stop the appraisal of wool unless he was removed. Dannenberg left for Germany in June 1948⁹⁸.

At the end of the conflict, the Australian authorities feared that former Nazi and Fascist internees, with few exceptions, not only had maintained firm their faith in Nazism and Fascism, but in future could again engage in subversive activities and espionage. This suspicion that future German associations, masquerading under social, sporting or cultural pretexts, might again represent a security threat was substantiated by the deposition given on 25 March 1946 at his trial in Nuremberg by Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, *Gauleiter* of the *Auslandsorganisation*. When questioned by Lieutenant Colonel J.M.G. Griffith-Jones, Junior Counsel for the United Kingdom, whether members of the *Auslandsorganisation* were involved in Fifth Column activities, he implicitly admitted it. He said: «It is quite evident that in an organization of this size the leader, who has his office at Berlin, cannot be closely acquainted with everything which is going on abroad and, more so, what is done against his instructions. I did not have the same disciplinary authority over my Party members abroad as did, for instance, some *Gauleiter* within the Reich. I need not elaborate on that, because it is self-evident. It is also evident, and this I know, that some Germans abroad, who were called on because of their patriotism in individual cases let themselves be used for purposes without the knowledge of the *Auslandsorganisation* and against its explicit instructions»⁹⁹.

Australian Intelligence noted that the former President of the *Deutsches Ausland Institut* (German Foreign Institute), Heinrich Kravinkel, upon his release from internment under restriction, «is engaged in re-establishing contact with his

former committee members», and that «it is probable that future attempts by Germany to launch propaganda in South Australia will again meet with co-operation from local residents»¹⁰⁰. This belief was not held just by an over-zealous Security officer, but was a concern shared by many in the Australian intelligence community. The officer sent to Europe in 1945 to investigate Nazi activities in Australia concluded his report to the Director-General on «The Future of the German Question in Australia» by recommending that, «as far as can be foreseen, it seems that it will still be necessary to keep watch on the activities of organisations in Australia which have any connection with Germany, and to pay particular attention to their overseas contacts. In this connection, ostensibly anti-Nazi organisations cannot be entirely disregarded, as some of them appear to be capable of developing their own particular type of nationalism»¹⁰¹. By the end of 1947, diehard Nazis were still kept in internment by Australia, awaiting deportation. A remarkable case was that of Theodor Junge, son of Hermann Junge, former Treasurer of the Winter Help Fund. In 1939, Junge Junior, aged 18, had been taken from Barker College, where he was boarding, to Tatura internment camp, where he associated with the leading Nazis. When questioned early in 1946, «he still maintained his Nazi outlook»¹⁰².

The authorities' fears found substantiation in the behaviour of some notorious Fascist ringleaders after the war. In 1948, Antonio Baccarini, the former head of the Dante Alighieri Society, at a reception for the Italian Opera Company visiting Sydney, held a speech praising Mussolini, condemning «traitor» King Victor Emmanuel III and adding that, even his betrayal «had not caused Italians to lose faith in their cause, which would ultimately triumph». Some of the guests left in disgust and a parliamentary question on the incident was put on notice for the Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell¹⁰³. A similar outcry (and another parliamentary question to Calwell) was heard in 1949, when former Consul-General Amedeo Mammalella appeared in Sydney. It transpired that Mammalella was Assistant Steward on the S. S. *Surriento*, and the Minister assured Parliament that «Mammalella made no effort to obtain permission to enter Australia and was on board the vessel when she left Australia»¹⁰⁴. The former Inspector-General of *Fasci* in Australasia, Felice Rando, who, on 30 June 1940, had left the country together with Mammalella and other consular staff on the Japanese vessel *Kamo Maru*, returned to Sydney in 1949, benefiting from the Certificate of Naturalisation granted to him on 8 April 1935¹⁰⁵.

Following the defeat of Fascism and Nazism in 1945, Fascist activities continued in Australia, pursued by those migrants and businessmen who in 1943-1945 had favoured the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* (RSI), the puppet regime created by Mussolini at Salò, in Northern Italy. Some had served in the Italian SS Corps or in the *Decima Legione MAS* under German command; others escaped abroad in order to avoid Italian de-fascistisation trials, and

continued to view with nostalgia their not so brutal friendship with their German *Kamaraden*. One of them was prominent businessman Enzo Oriolo, Chief Executive Officer of Electric Power Transmission Pty Ltd, a civil engineering company subsidiary to Italy's Società Anonima Elettificazione SpA (SAE), that would play an important role in the development of Australia in the second half of the Twentieth Century. It is important to detail Oriolo's *curriculum vitae* because he enjoyed powerful connections with Italy's defeated yet unrepentant Fascist *élite* and because his story illustrates the continuity of an Italian Fascist presence in Australia following the demise of Salò.

SAE had been established in Milan on 17 June 1926, «having as its aim the undertaking of electrification and similar works»¹⁰⁶. From September 1943 until the end of the Second World War, SAE was put under the direct control of the German company Energie G.m.b.H., a branch of the TODT organisation, and carried out extensive work for the Salò Republic. The company developed a close working relationship with the German occupiers who, on the day of the Nazi surrender on the Italian front, 25 April 1945, paid SAE the then enormous cash figure of 10 million lire for services rendered. After the war, SAE employed some staff of Energie G.m.b.H., among whom were its liaison officer and paymaster, Herr Unterweger¹⁰⁷, as well as former officers of Mussolini's *Repubblica Sociale Italiana*.

One of SAE's executives, Guido Corbellini, who at that time was also the Fascist *Podestà* (Mayor) of Corbetta, near Milan, in April 1945 was charged with collaboration with the German Todt Organisation and put against a wall by the partisans. At the last minute he had a miraculous escape from summary execution¹⁰⁸. It was Corbellini who, undaunted in his Fascist faith, later employed at SAE a group of ten former naval officers from the RSI who «had resigned their commissions to avoid taking the oath to the Republic [post-1946], while others were the victims of a questionable purge»¹⁰⁹. In a mini-replica of the famous Nazi ODESSA network (*Organisation der SS Angehörigen: Organization of Former SS Men*), set up to manage the escape from Europe of former Nazi officers, SAE despatched many of these Fascist naval officers, in need of inventing for themselves a new social credibility, to its projects and associated companies around the world. Commander Alfieri Uxa was sent to Brazil, Raffaello Allegri to India and then Brazil, Girolamo Manisco, Rodolfo Scarelli, Giuseppe Battisti and Gino Mantovani to the testing station at Lecco, Cabasso and Ezio Mangani to South Africa, and Enzo Oriolo to India and then to Australia¹¹⁰.

Exploiting the quasi-secret network of expatriate Fascist officials, in 1947 SAE was introduced to the South American market by a large consulting and engineering company, Techint, based in Sao Paolo, and by its Argentinian holding company Cometarsa, jointly owned by an engineer, Agostino Rocca

and by Count Dino Grandi, a controversial figure from the Fascist years¹¹¹. After having engineered Mussolini's downfall on 25 July 1943, Grandi, accompanied by his wife, two children and servant Remigio, in understandable fear of his life and after having shaven off his elegant goatee, had fled Italy under the assumed name of Domenico Galli and taken refuge first in Portugal and then at Sao Paolo, Brazil. He returned to Italy in the 'Sixties, after his acquittal from Rome's *Corte d'Assise* (Criminal Court), and set up with his son a model farm at Albareto, near Modena. He died in Bologna in 1988. South America was a haven for other Nazis and Fascists in search of anonymity, among them the former General Secretary of Fascist Branches Abroad, Piero Parini who, in 1945, was given 12-year jail sentence for his activities, but in June 1946 became a beneficiary of the amnesty granted by Communist Minister of Justice, Palmiro Togliatti, to 11,800 Fascist inmates, guilty of «political crimes»¹¹². In 1946 Parini took refuge in Argentina and later in Brasil, working for a company constructing liquefied gas ducts.

Born in La Spezia on 17 November 1909, Enzo Oriolo was alleged to have taken part at the early age of 13 to the March on Rome. In November 1936 he married Anna Maria Forzano, daughter of Gioacchino Forzano, the librettist of Giacomo Puccini's operas and official playwright of the Fascist Regime (he wrote three works in partnership with Benito Mussolini). The couple, who would give birth to a daughter, Rita, were sent a telegram of congratulations by Mussolini, who had read Oriolo's thesis presented in 1931-32 on «Italo-Ethiopian relations after World War I». Oriolo had studied at the University of Florence and later, at the University of Grenoble, France. Since Oriolo's father, Giovanni, was the Prefect of Verona, in March 1935 the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was instructed by Mussolini's Private Secretary, Osvaldo Sebastiani, to assist him in his exams to enter the diplomatic career («mi sta molto a cuore... assistenza al 100%, ma è debole [I have his case very much at heart... assist him 100%, but he is weak]»). Oriolo failed the test («tutte le prove scritte risultano meno che mediocri... sa di aver fatto male l'esame d'inglese [all the written exams are less than mediocre... he knows he failed the English exam]») ¹¹³. However, in 1936 Oriolo sat the tests again, and was admitted to the diplomatic service. On 28-30 August 1940 he was in the entourage accompanying Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano to the Vienna Award, arbitrating between Hungary and Romania¹¹⁴. During the Second World War Oriolo was *aide-du-camp* to Cesare De Vecchi, one of the *quadrumviri* of the March on Rome, then became second in command on the submarine *Barbarigo* and served on German Class «S» submarines operating in Scandinavia, to end in Junio Valerio Borghese's *Decima Mas* at Savona where, in April 1945, on the eve of the collapse of the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, he and the others received the order to scuttle their vessels. Borghese's opinion of Oriolo, as re-

ported by his son Andrea Scirè Borghese, was «of an experienced officer, who had been fully trained to take part in missions with his assault craft, he was only waiting for the order to go...». In 2004, at their annual reunion at Ponti sul Mincio, near Peschiera del Garda, Oriolo was still remembered with fondness by his former RSI's comrades-in-arms. At that meeting, Pasca Piredda, Press Officer of the *Decima*, recalled him as «the most handsome of the group»¹¹⁵. Following the Fascist collapse in 1945, Oriolo lived in India, Ceylon and the Middle East but never wavered in his cherished beliefs. In December 1970 he unflinchingly declared to the Author that, as far as he was concerned, the clock of history had stopped in 1945, when the Italy he knew and loved had forever been vanquished. Thereafter, in his opinion, the country was in the hands of «una banda di mascalzoni» (a bunch of scoundrels). Also, his blinkered vision of the world prompted him to divide people into «us» and «them», the «them» being whoever did not blindly endorse the beliefs of the Fascism which fought to the bitter end at Salò. Having read the Author's thesis on the diplomatic relations between Fascist Italy and the Soviet Union in 1939-40, when he had served as a junior diplomat, Oriolo bluntly dismissed him by noting that «we are on the opposite side of the barricade»¹¹⁶. In 1959, Oriolo became a Naturalised Australian and on 3 July 1964 was appointed Justice of the Peace in New South Wales. By then, he also sat on the board of FIAT of Australia and of Consolidated Insurances of Australia Ltd, as well as being a member of the Royal Motor Yacht Club, the Royal Sydney Squadron and the Elanora Country Club. A year before, in 1963, he re-married, the new bride being Peggy Madeline Cannon¹¹⁷.

During the 'Sixties Oriolo employed at EPT Junio Valerio Borghese's two sons, Andrea Scirè at Whyalla, SA, and Sydney, and Paolo at Hong Kong, and was alleged to contribute financially from Australia to the Italian neo-Fascist party, the *Movimento Sociale Italiano*. Paradoxically, when he had to go to Italy, to report to SAE in Milan, his revulsion for Republican Italy was such that he refused to fly *Alitalia*, preferring instead *Aeroflot*, as the Soviet airline was landing in Switzerland and he could reach destination by the shortest route on Italian soil. Oriolo also did not have any qualms in endorsing the racist regime of Apartheid South Africa. On 26 September 1968, the Australian Government granted him the Exequatur to act as Honorary Consul of South Africa in NSW and the Australian Capital Territory. On that occasion, the Australian Intelligence Security Organisation (ASIO) advised the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs that «a primary check has been carried out on the above named person and nothing of an adverse nature is known»¹¹⁸. At the time of the controversial South African Springbok Rugby Team Tour of Australia from July to August 1971, that resulted in widespread non-violent demonstrations, Oriolo's boat moored outside his Darling Point

home was firebombed. During those troubled weeks, while EPT's head office in Sussex Street was guarded by police, Oriolo feared for his personal safety, and used to borrow the Company's revolver from the Internal Auditor, Brian O'Shea, before going home.

Following Junio Valerio Borghese's failed *coup d'état* on 7-8 December 1970 against the Italian State, and his subsequent flight underground, the Italian Communist Party suspected that Borghese, aided by his sons and by Oriolo, was hiding in Australia, and sent one of its trusted officials, Ignazio Salemi, to investigate. Instead, Borghese was in Franco's Spain, where he died at Cadiz on 26 August 1974. Before and after his retirement in 1988, Oriolo continued to enjoy the *dolce vita* of Sydney's social and diplomatic Establishment, in particular his long-standing friendship with Lady (Mary) Fairfax, his partner on the Rose Bay golf course and to whom he provided financial advice. In fact, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on 21 April 1998 that «the smaller firm of Dibbs Crowther Osborne is acting for Lady (Mary) Fairfax and her Tailer investments, which has as its newest director her companion, Enzo Oriolo»¹¹⁹. Oriolo was also understandably proud of his exclusive appointment as one of Australia's eleven Knights of the bogus Order of St Thomas of Acre (*Chevaliers de l'Ordre Souverain Militaire et Hospitalier de Saint Thomas D'Acre*), although on 3 March 1951 the Italian Republic had approved a law barring its citizen from accepting this honour, because it was considered illegitimate. Sanctions, including fines and jail terms, were prescribed for those who conferred them or those who used them, even if conferred abroad. Yet, Oriolo's hostility towards 'new' Italy was temporarily and conveniently forgotten when, on 12 February 1968, the Republic conferred on him the award of *Commendatore* of the *Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana* for «his outstanding achievements in the industrial field and his keen interest in the welfare of the Italian settlers in Australia»¹²⁰. Australia, however, was more generous to the old Fascist diehard. In 1992 it bestowed upon him the honour of Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to industry and commerce, ironically a few years after the demise of Electric Power Transmission Pty Ltd. In 1988, when the European companies Asea and Brown Boveri (then a major owner of SAE) merged, EPT became a wholly owned subsidiary of ABB¹²¹. Enzo Oriolo died in Sydney, aged 93, on 4 November 2002¹²².

The fortunes of Italian Fascism in Australia flagged with the death of such old warriors as Oriolo and with the integration of the community into Australian society. However, the *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, believing that most migrants were still harbouring Fascist feelings, since the 1970s had established in Leichhardt a Branch of its offshoot, the *Comitato Tricolore degli Italiani nel Mondo* (Three-Coloured Committee of Italians Abroad) and campaigned for the right of Italians abroad to vote in Italy's political elections. When this

right was granted, in time for the elections of 9-10 April 2006, the result was a big disappointment for *Alleanza Nazionale*, the heirs of the Neo-Fascist *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, as most electors outside Italy, including Australia, voted for the parties of the Left. Under the second Berlusconi Government (2001-2006), a former Salò soldier and President of Italy's *Comitato Tricolore degli Italiani nel Mondo*, Mirko Tremaglia, had been granted political legitimacy by being appointed Minister of Italians Abroad. The circle had closed. In 2002, Tremaglia, during a pilgrimage to the Italian cemetery at El Alamein declared that there «the wrong side won»¹²³. Now he was in charge of a Ministry looking after the interests of Italians abroad, a role similar to the one performed during the Regime by Piero Parini, also a prominent Salò Fascist.

From 1933 until 1945, Italian responses to National Socialism in Australia, with the exception of the avowed enemies of Fascism within the Italian community, fluctuated from unconditioned support, mixed with an increasing degree of subservience, on the part of few diehards like Mammarella, Bianchi and Battistessa, to the often undeclared enmity by the many towards a Northern 'race' that had traditionally been portrayed by Italian nationalist propaganda as Italy's immemorial foe. After the Second World War, Fascist sympathies survived in people, like Oriolo, who had served with German officers in the RSI, and in people who spent more than five years in internment because of their political affiliation. To the hundred of thousands of Italians who emigrated to Australia after 1945, some having lived under German occupation and witnessed untold atrocities during the civil war that raged throughout Northern Italy between 1943 and 1945, Australia was a welcome opportunity to distance themselves from a past they could not forget. To them, the alliance between Fascism and Nazism represented a catastrophe of untold proportions, a disaster worse than the many which in the past afflicted their life like famine, pellagra, poverty and, ultimately, emigration.

Notes

- ¹ Denis Mack Smith, *Italy. A Modern History*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1959, p. 454.
- ² Franco Battistessa, Editorial «Mussolini e Hitler», *Il Giornale Italiano*, 16 September 1936, p. 4.
- ³ «My attachment to the person of the Duce has not changed... but I regret not having listened to reason, which imposed on me a brutal friendship in regard to Italy» (Adolf Hitler, April 1945), quoted in Frederick W. Deakin, *The Brutal Friendship. Mussolini, Hitler and the Fall of Italian Fascism*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1962, p. 6.
- ⁴ W. D. Borrie, *Italians and Germans in Australia. A Study of Assimilation*, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1954, pp. 51 and 158.

- ⁵ National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA), series SP1714/1, item N43197, Asmis to Bohle, 2 May 1934. The fact that Asmis' claim was inflated was recognised by Australian Intelligence. An un-dated report stated that «the 1933 Census showed that there were 10,818 males and 6,011 females in Australia born in Germany, of whom 8,080 males and 5,077 females were naturalised. The remainder, 2,738 males and 934 females, claimed German nationality. It will thus be seen that out of a total of 16,829 persons born in Germany, only 5,672 claimed German nationality. In addition to these there are an unknown number of persons of German descent born in Australia and in some cases it is reported that Australian born persons of German parentage are among the more ardent Nazis» (NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/13, Supplementary Information on German Organisations, p. 48). On this, see also: John Perkins, «The Swastika Down Under: Nazi Activities in Australia, 1933-39», *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 26, no. I, January 1991, p. 113. For an estimate of the Italian community in Australia during the 1930s, see Paolo Vita-Finzi, *Giorni lontani. Appunti e ricordi*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1989, p. 362. The 1936 edition of Sydney's *Illustrated Annual of Il Giornale Italiano* (p. 89), accounts for «over 60,000 Italians» in Australia, but this no doubt is an inflated number, aimed at exaggerating the importance of the colony.
- ⁶ NAA, series D1915, item SA16752, Seger to Pencer, 8 September 1938.
- ⁷ NAA, series D1915, item SA19907, Seger to Dr. Schwager, 3 June 1938.
- ⁸ NAA, series D1915, item SA16752, Seger to Pencer, 8 September 1938.
- ⁹ NAA, series C414, item 3, German General File, p. 77.
- ¹⁰ NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/17, Auslands Organisation. Its Development in Australia, p. 2. Adelaide Consul Oscar Seger confirmed the Service's report. In 1937 he wrote to the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office), Berlin, advising that «my main task is to bring together the Germans which [*sic*] have fallen into disunity... A strong confusion and lack of unity rules amongst the Germans, frequent moral uncleanness, turning away from the *Reichsdeutsche* amongst a section of the Australian Germans, amongst the former little understanding of the Party, and amongst the latter themselves, everything isn't as it should be» (NAA, series D1915, item SA19907, Seger to Rohde, Foreign Office, Berlin, 5 December 1937).
- ¹¹ NAA, series C414, item 3, German General File, Menche to Köhler, 7 October 1938. Also, see: NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/17, Nazi Activities in Australia, p. 1. Also, NAA, series D1915, item SA19907, Director-General of Security, Canberra, to Deputy-Director of Security, Adelaide, 11 September 1943, which states that «the Far Eastern section of the *Auslandsorganisation*... was used in the Far East for espionage purposes».
- ¹² NAA, series C415, item SA Part 2, Asmis to Burkhard, 12 August 1936.
- ¹³ NAA, series A6126, item 57, Battistessa to CIB Inspector Ronald Browne, 14 August 1939.
- ¹⁴ On this, see Gianfranco Cresciani, «Refractory Migrants. Fascist Surveillance on Italians in Australia, 1922-1943», *Altretalie*, no. 28, January-June 2004, pp. 6-47.
- ¹⁵ NAA, series C320, item SFA 4, General Staff, Military Intelligence to I.S.G.S., 1 to 6 Military Districts, 25 June 1936. Also, see: NAA, series C320, item SFA 4, Detective Constable Norman Spray to Inspector Keefe, Military Police Intelligence Sec-

- tion, 21 October 1940. An Italian informant, interned at Orange, stated that «he had no doubt that [OVRA] did exist in Australia. It was unlikely that its personnel would be known to any but the Party leader [Felice Rando, *n.d.a.*], or the chief of the Court of Discipline. Its activities in this country would be directed against Italians who were antifascist, but the only way discipline could be enforced on such persons would be by boycott».
- ¹⁶ NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/17, Auslands Organisation. Its Development in Australia, p. 7. See also: NAA, series D1915, item SA19907, Bohle to Seger, 9 May 1939. Also, NAA, SP1714/1, item N40377, German Consular Staff. Also, NAA, series C414, item 3, German General File, p. 5. Henschell was considered so dangerous that, upon the breakout of hostilities in September 1939, Military Intelligence, upon personal instructions from the Prime Minister, attempted, unsuccessfully, to stop him from returning to Germany (NAA, series SP1714/1 item N40377, H. E. Jones to Inspector D.R.B. Mitchell, 15 September 1939).
- ¹⁷ NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/17, Auslands Organisation. Its Development in Australia, item «Gestapo».
- ¹⁸ NAA, series D1915, item SA20499, Subversive Activities: Australian Nazis and Fascists, 19 January 1943.
- ¹⁹ NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/17, Auslands Organisation. Its Development in Australia, item «Nazi organisation in Australia», p. 11.
- ²⁰ NAA, series A9108, item roll 9/3, Longfield Lloyd, Director-General, Security Service to Brigadier Sir David Petrie, 7 December 1945. For a detailed map of Nazi Germany's complex web of espionage agencies, see: Donald Gurry, *La guerra segreta nell'Italia liberata. Spie e sabotatori dell'Asse 1943-1945*, Gorizia, Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2004.
- ²¹ Dr Becker had fallen in disgrace with the Party following a disagreement with Asmis on how to rally German migrants to the Party. Also, in 1937, Rear-Admiral Menche instructed the Adelaide Consul, Oscar Seger, to advise Becker that «if Dr. Becker should by chance still have aspirations to the post of a political leader, you can inform him that since his marriage with an Australian this is on principle no longer possible» (NAA, series D1915, item SA19907, Menche to Seger, 11 November 1937).
- ²² NAA, series C414, item 3, German General File, p. 4. The Director of the Commonwealth Investigation Branch thought that «Ladendorff is undoubtedly the most dangerous German we have here» (NAA, series A367, item C83948, File Note, 19 July 1938).
- ²³ NAA, series SP1714/1, item N43197, Asmis to Foreign Office, Berlin, 26 September 1938.
- ²⁴ NAA, series C414, item 3, German General File, p. 12.
- ²⁵ On this, see: Gianfranco Cresciani, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia. 1922-1945*, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1980.
- ²⁶ Cit. in: Claudio Pavone, *Una Guerra Civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 1994, p. 180.
- ²⁷ The *Giornale Italiano*, on 14 December 1938, mentioned that Melbourne's Consul, Dr. Walter Drechsler, attended a dinner held in honour of Consul-General

- Amedeo Mammalella, and on 28 December 1938 commented that the demonstration held in front of the delicatessen shop in William Street, Sydney, owned by Johannes Frerck, one of the most active Party members and deemed dangerous by Australian Intelligence, was a «vulgar and stupid act» carried out by Communists. The same newspaper, on 11 January 1939, wrote that the soccer game at Sydney's Domain between the sailors of the MV *Romolo* and the German vessel *Main* was interrupted by the Police. Again, on 3 May 1939, the *Giornale Italiano* reported that, following the Anzac Day March in Sydney, Australian returned soldiers demonstrated in front of the German Consulate-General in Bridge Street and obtained the removal of the German flag. The edition of 10 May 1939 mentioned that the same had happened in Brisbane on 25 April, and that the German Consul, O. H. Witte, had lodged a protest with the Australian authorities. On 3 May 1939, this Sydney paper gave an account of the gathering held on 29 April at Melbourne's Tivoli Club, where «the Italian community was a most welcome guest of the German club in a remarkable demonstration of Italo-German solidarity». Consul Walter Drechsler was in attendance, while for the Italians present were Consular Secretary Gianni Borsi, who was in charge of surveillance of Italian migrants, and the local *Fascio* Secretary, Mario Speirani. On Borsi's espionage activities, see: Gianfranco Cresciani, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia. 1922-1945*, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1980, p. 80.
- 28 Mario Donosti, *Mussolini e l'Europa. La politica estera fascista*, Rome, Edizioni Leonardo, 1945, pp. 95 and 75.
- 29 NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/17, Nazi Organisation in Australia, p. 10.
- 30 NAA, series ST1233/1, item N9203, Werz, Consular File Note, 11 December 1935.
- 31 NAA, series ST1233/1, item N9203, Baccarini to Asmis, 22 October 1937.
- 32 *Giornale Italiano*, 3 May 1939.
- 33 *Giornale Italiano*, 9 February 1938.
- 34 Mario Lucioli, *Palazzo Chigi: anni roventi. Ricordi di vita diplomatica italiana dal 1933 al 1948*, Milano, Rusconi, 1976, p. 82.
- 35 Felice Rando, interview with Gianfranco Cresciani, Sydney, 7 September 1971.
- 36 NAA, series C123/1, item 13249, Extract from Tatura Internment Group. Weekly Intelligence Report no. 112, un-dated.
- 37 NAA, series A9108, item roll 13/33, Nazi Activities in Australia. Report on Investigations in Germany, 7 February 1946, p. 5.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 39 NAA, series D1915, item SA19907, Deputy-Director of Security, South Australia to Director-General of Security, Canberra, 13 August 1945.
- 40 Paolo Vita-Finzi, *Giorni lontani. Appunti e ricordi*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1989. See also: NAA, series A1838, item 1515/1/36/26, Consular Representatives. Vita-Finzi.
- 41 Mario Lucioli, *Palazzo Chigi: anni roventi. Ricordi di vita diplomatica italiana dal 1933 al 1948*, Milano, Rusconi, 1976, p. 80.
- 42 NAA, series A367, item C83948, Inspector D.R.B. Mitchell to Inspector-in-Charge, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, 12 December 1938.
- 43 NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/17, Nazi Organisation in Australia, Connection with Italian Fascists.

- 44 NAA, series D1915, item SA20499, Liaison between Nazis and Fascists, Security Service Report, 19 January 1943. Also, the Italian weekly *Il Giornale Italiano* was received by the Sydney Nazis, while *Die Brücke* was sent in exchange. In August 1939, the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Sydney invited German representatives to an official banquet at fashionable Romano's Restaurant (NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/17, Nazi Organisation in Australia, Connection with Italian Fascists). Arnold von Skerst, editor of *Die Brücke* pencilled in his desk calendar his attending an Italian evening on 24 August 1939 (NAA, series C415, item 47, Arnold von Skerst, NLB/20/10/39), and on 24 June 1939 *Die Brücke* reported from Perth that, «on Sunday, 4 June 1939, the Italian Club showed a film on the Führer's visit in Italy, to which the Stronghold and the *Deutsches Kamerad-Schafts Heim der Club Germania* (D.K.H.) were invited. The attendance was once again a complete success» (NAA, series A9108, item roll 8/2, Nazi Activities in Western Australia, p. 3).
- 45 NAA, series A12102, item 66, Aliens Tribunal no. 1, Objection no. 40 in the matter of Giovanni Gremmo, 12 February 1941. Despite his disappointment, Gremmo would still cling to his Fascist beliefs. In August 1939 he gave a lecture at Sydney's *Dopolavoro* on «Fascist Italy's Commercial Policy» (*Italo-Australian*, 12 August 1939, p. 2).
- 46 *Il Giornale Italiano*, 30 November 1938.
- 47 *Italian Bulletin of Australia*, February 1939, p. 6.
- 48 *Illustrated Annual of Il Giornale Italiano*, 30 June 1936, p. 88.
- 49 NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/17, Nazi Organisation in Australia, p. 5.
- 50 NAA, series SP1714/1, item 49057, German Woolbuyers, February 1943.
- 51 NAA, series SP1714/1, item N43197, Arnold von Skerst to von Drehnen, 12 February 1935.
- 52 NAA, series A12102, item 66, Aliens Tribunal no. 1, Objection no. 40 in the matter of Giovanni Gremmo, 12 February 1941. See also: NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/17, Nazi Organisation in Australia, p. 8.
- 53 NAA, series SP1714/1, item 49057, German Woolbuyers, February 1943, p. 6.
- 54 NAA, series 4311, item 745/2, Notes on the organization and activities of the Italian Fascist Party in the United Kingdom, the Dominions and Colonies, p. 29.
- 55 NAA, series C320, item SFA 14, Intelligence Section, Eastern Command to Commonwealth Crown Solicitor, 11 January 1942.
- 56 NAA, series ST1233/1, item N38564, Detective Constable Fraser to Police Headquarters, Sydney, 22 November 1939.
- 57 NAA, series A367, item C69657, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, Sydney to Commonwealth Investigation Branch, Canberra, April and 3 July 1939.
- 58 NAA, series A367, item C83948, Inspector D.R.B. Mitchell to Director, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, 27 June 1939. Previously, Mitchell had already manifested his blind trust in his Nazi interlocutors in a letter to his superior: «Attention is invited to the fact that this office is on such terms with the leaders of the Nazi Party that they frankly volunteer information as to their movements, mainly, I think, as a gesture of respect and friendliness and to disabuse any thought as to their bona fide» (NAA, series A367, item C83948, Inspector D.R.B. Mitchell to Director, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, 9 June 1939).

- ⁵⁹ NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/15, Herschel to *Auslandsorganisation*, Berlin, 9 August 1939.
- ⁶⁰ NAA, series D1915, item SA20499, Liaison between Nazis and Fascists, Security Service Report, 19 January 1943. On Köhler's claim, see: Barbara Poniewierski, «Arnold von Skerst: Servant of two Masters», paper delivered at the Conference on *National Socialism in Australasia: A Critical Evaluation of its Effect in Australasia and its Aftermath*, University of Queensland, 25-26 September 2006.
- ⁶¹ In a letter dated 14 July 1937, Burkard advised Köhler that «the ores from here are secure for you and 40,000 tons must leave here each year and I have even bought mines for Krupp already, but everything surreptitiously and diplomatically through French and English hands, but all this PLEASE ONLY FOR YOU AND POSSIBLY ASMIS» [capital and underline in the original] (NAA, series ST1233/1, item N38570, Burkard to Köhler, 14 July 1937). A committed Nazi, at the time of the *Anschluss*, Burkard wrote to Otto von Drehnen, President of Australia's *Bund*: «I now feel so proud that Austria is with us and Hitler, I think, is a wonderful man and I in my small way must work and endure here and get us nickel for as much arms as we need to show all those who tried to keep Germans as slaves what they can expect if they keep going in their rotten ways» (NAA, series C415, item 5A Part 2, Burkard to von Drehnen, un-dated).
- ⁶² NAA, series SP1714/1, item N43197, List of persons on board German ship *Alster*.
- ⁶³ NAA, series C1070, item N64/500, Barnwell to Inspector-in-Charge, CIB, 14 July 1939.
- ⁶⁴ NAA, series A12102, item 82, Italian Organisations, p. 14.
- ⁶⁵ NAA, series A4311, item 745/3, Additional Notes on the Organisation and Activities of the Italian Fascist Party in the United Kingdom, Dominions and Colonies.
- ⁶⁶ On this, see: Gianfranco Cresciani, «The Bogey of the Italian Fifth Column» in Gaetano Rando and Michael Arrighi (eds.), *Italians in Australia. Historical and Social Perspectives*, University of Wollongong, 1993, pp. 67-83. On internment policy, see also: Margaret Bevege, *Behind Barbed Wire. Internment in Australia during World War II*, St Lucia, Queensland University Press, 1993. Also: Noel W. Lamidey, *Aliens Control in Australia. 1939-1946*, Sydney 1974, manuscript. Also, Gianfranco Cresciani, «Emigrazione e politica in Australia durante il fascismo: il caso degli italiani del N.S.W. alla vigilia della seconda guerra mondiale» in Paolo Bertinetti and Claudio Gorlier (eds.), *Australiana. Italia, Europa, Australia: Ieri e Oggi*, Roma, Bulzoni Editore, 1982. Also: Cate Elkner, Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien, Gaetano Rando and Anthony Cappello, *Enemy Aliens*, Connor Court, Bacchus Marsh, 2005.
- ⁶⁷ NAA, series D1915, item SA20499, Director-General of Security, Canberra, to Deputy-Director of Security, Adelaide, 28 September 1943.
- ⁶⁸ NAA, series D1915, item SA20499, Liaison between Nazis and Fascists, Security Service Report, 19 January 1943.
- ⁶⁹ NAA, series D1915, item SA20499, Liaison between Nazis and Fascists, Security Service Report, 19 January 1943. During the 1938 visit to Melbourne of Italian cruiser *Raimondo Montecuccoli*, Triaca was pointing out Italian anti-Fascists demonstrating at the pier to members of the crew (NAA, series A367, item C63116,

- Southern Command Folio 4, 11 June 1940), who were told by their officers that they «were free to do anything they wanted» to the anti-Fascists if the latter approached the warship (NAA, series C415, item 52, Letter by *Montecuccoli's* Engine Officer Francesco Pernice to Signor Messina, 5 March 1938). Incidentally, Triaca's parents, still in Italy, disliked the Germans for quite peculiar reasons. In writing to his wife in 1943, Triaca said that his father would soon be able to speak in English to the advancing Allied troops «and will be pleased because he does not like the Germans just as my poor mother does not like them. Do you remember when she wrote that the Germans took away all the oranges?» (NAA, series A367, item C63116, Adelaide District Censor's Internee Mail Report, 12 September 1943).
- 70 NAA, series D1915, item SA20499, Liaison between Nazis and Fascists, Deputy-Director of Security, South Australia to Director-General of Security, Canberra, 11 November 1943.
- 71 NAA, series A9108, item roll 13/33, Nazi Activities in Australia. Report on Investigations in Germany, 7 February 1946, p. 7.
- 72 *Hitler's Table Talk*, 18 December 1941, noon, p. 150, http://www.adolfhitler.ws/lib/books/table/css/table_150.htm.
- 73 NAA, series A367, item C18000/317, Objection no. 6, Gariglio Luigi, Tribunal no. 3, 20 January 1941.
- 74 NAA, series SP1714/1, item N29007, Notes from Camp Intelligence Reports no. 13, Murchison P. W. Group, Victoria To 25 December 1943.
- 75 NAA, series C329, item 1014, Objection no. 72, Yonna Lamberto, 10 April 1941.
- 76 NAA, series C123, item 21669, Letter by 2088/39 to Consul-General, Sydney, 13 and 27 July 1937.
- 77 NAA, series C123, item 21669, Asmis to 2088/39, 6 August 1937. Australian Intelligence did not share such a high opinion on the Italian doctor. A report written in 1942, when Cilento was Director-General of the Queensland Government Health and Medical Services states that «Cilento has an overwhelming desire for the limelight – he is an exhibitionist of the first water [*sic*] and a superlative salesman – of himself: whereby he has gained the good-will – even the admiration of those (mainly politicians) who, being unfortunate as to their educational armamentarium, are not in a position to discriminate between tinsel and gold» (NAA, series C123, item 21669, From no. 1 to BT, 15 December 1942). After the war, another officer noted in his report that «Sir Raphael's association with Fascists in Australia is the subject of a separate file» (NAA, series A9108, item roll 13/33, Nazi Activities in Australia. Report on Investigations in Germany, p. 4).
- 78 NAA, series SP1714/1, item N43197, Extract from Walter Schumacher's File no. 138. Names and Addresses taken from Address Book.
- 79 NAA, series A9108, item roll 8/3, *Die Brücke*, 16 July 1938. For a biographical account on Cilento, see: Fedora Gould Fisher, *Raphael Cilento. A Biography*, St Lucia, Queensland University Press, 1994.
- 80 NAA, series AP538/1, item SA20499, Security Service Report, 19 January 1943.
- 81 NAA, series 1233/1, item N25326, Italian Enemy Aliens and Naturalised British Subjects of Italian Origin suitable for review in relation to release and employment under supervision of national work.

- ⁸² NAA, series 1233/1, item N25326, Bianchi's letter, dated 28 October 1940.
- ⁸³ NAA, series A435, item 1950/4/2447, Director, Commonwealth Investigation Service, Canberra, to Secretary, Department of Immigration, Canberra, 9 May 1947. After his release from internment, Bianchi became involved with the management of Romano's Restaurant in Sydney, and later transferred his activities to the Colony Club, a nightclub type of restaurant at Sylvania, near the Georges River. His name featured prominently in the notorious Royal Commission into the liquor trade in Sydney (NAA, series C3939/2, item N57/75261, B. C. Wall to N. Lamidey, 6 December 1957).
- ⁸⁴ NAA, series ST1233/1, item N38564, Wolf to Camp Leader Hermann Junge, 6 April 1942.
- ⁸⁵ NAA, series C1070, item N64/500, Major Hattam to Security Headquarters, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, 5 July 1941.
- ⁸⁶ NAA, series SP1714/1, item N29007, Constables Mantle and Pratt to M.P.I. Section, Police Headquarters, Sydney, 28 May 1941.
- ⁸⁷ NAA, series ST1233/1, item N9203, Intelligence Report no. 58, 14D Internment Camp, 14 March 1944.
- ⁸⁸ NAA, series C414, item 6, 12 PW Camp Cowra, Fascist Activities in «A» Compound, 21 November 1944.
- ⁸⁹ Noel W. Lamidey, *Aliens Control in Australia. 1939-1946*, Sydney 1974, manuscript. p. 53.
- ⁹⁰ NAA, series A9108, item roll 13/33, Nazi Activities in Australia. Report on Investigations in Germany, 7 February 1946, p. 5.
- ⁹¹ *Truth*, Sydney, 26 December 1948.
- ⁹² NAA, series D1915, item SA16752, Stanbury to Major Hattam, Investigation Branch, 21 January 1947. Also, *The News*, Adelaide, 14 March 1949.
- ⁹³ NAA, series A1068, item IC47/15/1/16/1, Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Canberra, to the Australian Military Mission, Berlin, 20 May 1949.
- ⁹⁴ NAA, series A1380, item EP115, *Auswärtiges Amt*, Aide Memoire, 30 May 1953.
- ⁹⁵ On Karl Asmis, see: John Perkins, «An Old-Style Imperialist as National Socialist. Consul-General Dr. Rudolf Asmis (1879-1945?)» in John Milfull (ed.), *The Attractions of Fascism. Social Psychology and Aesthetics of the «Triumph of the Right»*, Oxford, Berg, 1990, pp. 291-306. In 1953, the West German Ambassador to Australia was still unsure of Asmis's fate. In a letter to Treasurer Sir Arthur Fadden, he stated that «it can hardly be assumed that Dr Asmis – who should be over seventy years of age by now – has survived the sufferings of captivity inflicted upon him by the Russians» (NAA, series A1380, item EP115, W. Hess to Sir Arthur Fadden, 18 August 1953).
- ⁹⁶ NAA, series A9108, item roll 13/33, Nazi Activities in Australia, Report on Investigations in Germany, 7 February 1946, p. 4. Also, NAA, series A367, item C83948, Ladendorff, Walter.
- ⁹⁷ NAA, series SP1714/1, item N25832, Tatura Internment Group Weekly Intelligence Report no. 118, 31 March 1945.
- ⁹⁸ NAA, series SP1714/1, item N25832, A. A. Wilks to Deputy Director, Commonwealth Investigation Service, Sydney, 22 December 1947. Also, Commonwealth

- Investigation Service, Canberra to Deputy-Director, Commonwealth Investigation Service, Sydney, 15 June 1948.
- ⁹⁹ Nuremberg Trial Proceedings, vol. 10, Nineteenth Day, Monday 25 March 1946, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/imt/proc/03-25-46.htm#boh1e1>.
- ¹⁰⁰ NAA, series A9108, item roll 7/15, Deputy-Director of Security, S.A. to Director-General of Security, Canberra, 7 and 13 February 1945.
- ¹⁰¹ NAA, series A9108, item roll 13/33, Nazi Activities in Australia, Report on Investigations in Germany, 7 February 1946, p. 19.
- ¹⁰² NAA, series A472, item W184, Memorandum for the Director, Commonwealth Investigation Service, Canberra, 21 April 1947.
- ¹⁰³ NAA, series ST1233/1, item N9203, Antonio Baccarini. In 1940, the Security Service noted that Baccarini, «prominent *Fascio* member whose reputation is anti-British, is now employed by the A.B.C. on the Italian Propaganda Broadcasts Overseas. It has been said of old that no man can serve two masters» (NAA, series A12102, item 82, Italian Organisations, p. 9).
- ¹⁰⁴ NAA, series A434, item 1949/3/15282, Hansard, Answer to Questions, 7 July 1949.
- ¹⁰⁵ NAA, series SP1732, item Rando, Felice. See also: NAA, series A434, item 1949/3/20798. Also: NAA, series BP4/3, item Italian Rando F. For an account of Rando's life and activities in Australia, see: Felice Rando, interview with Gianfranco Cresciani, Sydney, 7 September 1971.
- ¹⁰⁶ Corrado Pizzinelli, *The Story of SAE and its Men*, Udine, Magnus Edizioni, 1986, p. 17.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* For a detailed account of ODESSA's *modus operandi*, see: Uki Goñi, *The Real ODESSA, How Perón Brought the Nazi War Criminals to Argentina*, New York, Granta Books, 2003. For the Italian edition, see: Uki Goñi, *Operazione ODESSA. La fuga dei gerarchi nazisti verso l'Argentina di Perón*, Milano, Garzanti, 2003. Also, for an account on the immunity enjoyed by former *Decima Mas* operatives after the Second World War, see: Nicola Tranfaglia, *Come nasce la Repubblica. La Mafia, il Vaticano e il Neofascismo nei documenti americani ed italiani. 1943-1947*, Milano, Bompiani, 2004. Alfieri Uxa, one of the key commanders of the *Decima Mas*, from October 1944 was in charge of the Vega Battalion, a group of 70 commandos that were carrying out espionage and sabotage activities behind Allied lines. Allegri was commanding officer of a *Decima* detachment in La Spezia and Commander Rodolfo Scarelli assisted Borghese in the aborted negotiations with the partisans of the Osoppo Brigade to form a common front against the «Reds». The meetings were held at Conegliano in January 1945. Another officer of the *Decima*, Lieutenant Giorgio Zanardi, in November 1944 warned Borghese that Scarelli was «a shady character [*losca figura*], that he [Borghese] had appointed as commander of one of his formations without knowing that he had borrowed money all over Southern Italy and had fled when the situation had become untenable» (Tranfaglia, *Come nasce la Repubblica. La Mafia, il Vaticano e il Neofascismo nei documenti americani ed italiani. 1943-1947*, Milano, Bompiani,

- 2004, pp. 9, 15-16, 34, 56-58). For a history of the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, see: Frederick W. Deakin, *The Last Days of Mussolini*, Ringwood, Penguin Books, 1962. Also, Lutz Klinkhammer, *L'occupazione tedesca in Italia. 1943-1945*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 1996.
- ¹¹¹ Corrado Pizzinelli, *The Story of SAE and its Men*, Udine, Magnus Edizioni, 1986, p. 53. Agostino Rocca, during the 'Twenties and 'Thirties, practically «invented» Italian steel industry by founding his company, Dalmine. At the fall of Fascism, he took refuge to Argentina, where he established his business empire. In 1996, Dalmine began trading in Italy, where Agostino's sons, Paolo and Gianfelice, also founded another company, Sirti. By 2005, the Rocca multinational empire had an annual turnover of US\$6.5 billion and employed twenty seven thousand people. Gianfelice Rocca was also Vice-President of *Confindustria*, the Italian Confederation of Industry (*Corriere della Sera*, 22 February 2005, p. 18).
- ¹¹² <http://www.italia-rsi.org/uomini/parini.htm>. On Togliatti's amnesty, see: Mimmo Franzinelli, *L'ammnistia Togliatti. 22 giugno 1946. Colpo di spugna sui crimini fascisti*, Milano, Mondadori, 2006. Also, Roy Palmer Domenico, *Processo ai fascisti. 1943-1948. Storia di un'epurazione che non c'è stata*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1996.
- ¹¹³ Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome. Segreteria Particolare del Duce, Busta 160.924, Oriolo, Enzo, Notes by Osvaldo Sebastiani, Mussolini's Private Secretary, 25 February 1935, 5 March 1935, 4 June 1935 and 17 December 1935. Gioacchino Forzano was a fervent admirer of the Duce throughout his life, until his death in Rome in 1970. In 1954 he published in Florence *Mussolini autore drammatico*, portraying the «Man of Providence» as an immensely gifted playwright. His file in the *Segreteria particolare del Duce. Carteggio riservato [1922-1943]*, deposited at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome is rife with sycophantic letters of praise for the Duce and of thanks for «the historical moment that You enable us to live in» (On this, see: Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce. Gli anni del consenso. 1929-1936*, Torino, Einaudi, 1974, pp. 31 and note, 32, 34 note, 578. Also, Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce. Lo stato totalitario. 1936-1940*, Torino, Einaudi, 1981, p. 225 note).
- ¹¹⁴ Galeazzo Ciano *Diario 1939-43*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1963, pp. 340-42; Gianfranco Cresciani, *Fascist Italy and the Problem of the Soviet Union: June 1939 - November 1940*, un-published BA Hons Thesis, October 1970. Also, Oriolo's oral statement to Gianfranco Cresciani, December 1970.
- ¹¹⁵ Andrea Scirè Borghese, Email to Gianfranco Cresciani, 19 November 2004. For an account of Prince Borghese's life, see: Sergio Nesi, *Junio Valerio Borghese*, Bologna, Lo Scarabeo Editrice, 2004.
- ¹¹⁶ Enzo Oriolo to Gianfranco Cresciani, oral statement, December 1970.
- ¹¹⁷ National Archives of Australia, Canberra, series A1838, item 1515/1/74/1 Part 1, Consular Representatives in Australia, Dr. E.G.A. Oriolo - Hon. Consul Sydney.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, ASIO Regional Director, ACT, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Canberra, 25 May 1968.
- ¹¹⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 April 1998. In his latter years, Oriolo was often seen escorting Lady Fairfax at social functions. In January 1995, on the occasion of the *première* of Puccini's opera *Turandot* at Sydney's Opera House, the gossip column

of the *Sun Herald* published their photo and reported that «what opening hight would it be without the doyenne of the Australian Opera Foundation, Mary Fairfax, coquettishly clinging onto the arm of Dr. Enzo Oriolo. The two have been spotted together quite a bit lately, and “Mary certainly looks years younger”, observed one opening night regular» (*Sun Herald*, 8 January 1995, p. 126).

¹²⁰ <http://www.mail-archive.com/ctrl@listserv.aol.com/msg10910.html>. Also, <http://www.cnicg.net/falsiordini.asp>. Also, <http://www.heraldica.org/topics/orders/itbgord.htm>.

There was an international children's book fair in Bologna, Italy, in 1976. During the course of a dinner of friends associated with the organisation of the fair, there was discussion of ancient Orders. This moved from the subject of religious Orders like the Dominicans and the Benedictines, and thence to Orders of Chivalry with some discussion of the Order of Malta and the Holy Sepulchre. A certain Signor Francesco Caponera mentioned the order of St Thomas and produced a card stating that he was a councillor at law and Consul General for Italy to the Isle of Mauritius! The Italian government withdrew his services in that regard in 1980 following his notoriety as «Grand Master of the Order of St Thomas of Acre». He produced a false history of this Order and an address at 88 Via Beccaria in Rome. He was visited, by an investigator into bogus Orders who discovered his office on the first floor adorned with a number of framed diplomas including that of the totally unknown Orders of the Silence and also of the Sword of Cyprus! He admitted that the Order had been banned in France but that he was trying to get proofs of authenticity from the British Museum. He thought it proved an enormous difficulty to obtain recognition from The Vatican. He had a magnificent portrait of Prince Caponera di Sebaste adorned with a habit and an elaborate collar as Grand Master of the Order. The gentleman in the picture was wearing a considerable number of decorations, which were difficult to recognise. There is, as one might imagine, no «Prince Caponera di Sebaste», and never has been.

<http://www.britishancestry.org/articles.php?year=2003&month=7&id=9>. See also: National Archives of Australia, Canberra, series A1838, item 1515/18/108, Decorations and Awards - Italian - Oriolo, Enzo. Italian Embassy to Department of External Affairs, Canberra, 11 October 1967 and 21 March 1968. See also: National Archives of Australia, Canberra, series A463, item 1967 / 5828, Dr. E. Oriolo, Foreign Honour.

¹²¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 January 1992.

¹²² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 November 2002; *La Fiamma*, 4 December 2002. On Oriolo, see also *Australian Business*, 11 November 1982.

¹²³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,726705,00.htm>

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