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Membership and Voting Strength

1. Almirante refused to specify the strength of MSI membership. He was confident that, if a general election were held now, the MSI would secure about 2 million votes. If MSI meetings were allowed to be held in the open, this number would no doubt be increased.
2. It is not true, as is generally believed, that the majority of MSI members come from the middle class. Many of this class are prepared to vote for the MSI in a secret ballot, but are afraid to record open support for it by becoming members. In fact, about 70 per cent of the MSI's members were from the artisan and working classes.
3. The MSI refuses to have anything to do with men like Giuseppe Bottai, who "betrayed Fascism" on 25 July 1943. It would, however, present among its candidates at the next general election many prominent men of Fascist days who were not compromised, in the eyes of the MSI, by the events of that date.

Funds

4. The MSI is a poor party, as can be seen by its lack of publications. It has only one weekly. Over 70 per cent of its funds come from the voluntary subscriptions of ordinary members. As an example, the Florence Federation of the MSI has just acquired new office premises at a rental of 100,000 lire a month. The money will be obtained through the contribution of 1,000 lire a month by 100 members.
5. MSI Headquarters normally never gives a single lira to the Federations. During the last electoral campaign, a few posters were paid for by Headquarters and sent to Federations, but the majority of electoral propaganda matter was paid for by the Federations themselves.

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6. The only money which had been received from abroad came from Italian sympathizers in the Argentine. Small sums were given to the MSI from time to time by industrialists, businessmen and landowners. These were the only ones who could afford to make occasional contributions of half a million or a million lire. He denied that any strings were attached to these contributions; if there were, they would not be accepted. Before the last general election campaign, a very prominent Milanese businessman had offered to finance the MSI's entire electoral campaign, provided that his election as an MSI Deputy was assured. The offer was turned down.

Internal Groupings

7. Almirante did not describe himself as a leader of a left wing of the MSI. He said that the MSI, like all political parties, had a left, center and right wing, although they were not clearly defined. He and Augusto De Marsanich lead the center; the left was, more or less, led by the former trades unionist Ugo Clavensani; and the right by Eric Mario Gray, editor of Il Nazionale (not yet a full-fledged member) and Luigi Tonelli, editor of La Rivolta Ideale.

General Policy and Beliefs

8. The arch-enemy of the MSI is Communism, but it will not, in any circumstance, unite with the Christian Democratic Party for its suppression.
9. The MSI wishes to introduce a real democracy; i.e., a genuine system of government by the people for the people. The present regime in Italy is a "partocracy" and not a democracy. A few men on Party Executive Committees controlled the country. If the MSI comes to power, it will establish democracy by means of a new kind of parliament, not dependent on the will of one man, as under pre-1943 Fascism, but on nationalized trade unions, or corporations.
10. The essential difference between the MSI parliament and the Fascist "Camera dei Fasci e delle Corporazioni" is that in the former, power would be secured from below, not from above. All appointments would be by election, and not by designation.
11. The MSI is called by its enemies a "nostalgic" party. That is an inaccurate appellation, since they do not have any intention of going back to Fascism sic et simpliciter. They maintained on the other hand that the twenty years of Fascist rule could not be ignored as if they had never happened. The MSI wishes to take the good of Fascism, reject the bad, and go ahead from there.
12. The real "nostalgics" were the anti-Fascists who want to return to pre-Fascist days as if Fascism had never occurred. The MSI was born out of resistance to this unrealistic form of "nostalgia", and in protest against the treatment of Fascists after the war.

Attitude to North Atlantic Treaty Organization

13. Before the adherence of Italy to the Atlantic Pact was debated in Parliament, the MSI leaders had asked Premier Alcide De Gasperi privately whether Italy's inclusion would automatically bring about an annulment of the Peace Treaty, so that Italy would be on an equal footing with other member states. No reply had been received, and accordingly the MSI had voted against Italy's adherence. Now that the Western Powers have formally declared their approval of a revision of the Treaty, the MSI is no longer opposed to the Atlantic Pact. Its attitude was the same as German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's: "equal duties and equal rights."
14. They welcome, in fact, any alliance which would strengthen Italy's defensive position. However, in his view, the Christian Democrats have greatly exaggerated Italy's defensive possibilities. The vast majority of the population

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had no desire to fight in another war. If Italy were attacked, as matters stood at present, the only ones who will really fight will be the Communists and the neo-Fascists, and they would fight against one another. In fact, Italy, in his opinion, was gradually heading towards another civil war.

Attitude to the National Front

15. The Front has no real existence. It is merely a name around which various ideas and newspaper articles have been wound. Many of those interested in the idea have completely contrasting views on how it should materialize. Some would like it to take the form of a new party, ultimately merging with the MSI, the Monarchists, and perhaps the Liberals and other minor nationalistic groups. Others see in it a form of super-Executive Committee which would lay down principles and issue very general directives to the parties concerned, which would retain their individuality.
16. The only alliance which exists at present between nationalist parties is the tactical alliance between the MSI and the Monarchists for the administrative elections. This came into existence only because the electoral system was such (with related groups) that all such parties, with even a minimum in common, must join up in order to survive. Through this alliance, the MSI expects to obtain a majority, at the next administrative elections, in many of the principal towns in the South.

Attitude of the Church to the MSI

17. There have been and there will continue to be contacts between the MSI, and Catholic Action and the Vatican. This is a natural development. The MSI has publicly declared its intention of keeping faith with the Concordat, which is within its policy. The Vatican is not entirely satisfied with the Christian Democrats and, always wanting a second string to its bow if possible, looks upon the MSI as an anti-Communist reserve to fall back on in case of necessity.

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