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PROFILASSI NAZIONALE: THE POLITICS OF EXILE IN FASCIST ITALY

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation examines *confino*, or forced internal exile in Fascist Italy. My work follows a cultural, aesthetic, and theoretical trajectory that integrates disparate types of texts, including juridical statutes that formed the legal organization of Italy, political speeches and statements, novels, memoirs, and film, in order to tease out the ways in which the Fascist regime sought to immobilize its political opponents and practice *chirurgia fascista*—a term Benito Mussolini uses in his “Discorso dell’Ascensione” in 1927 to justify the removal and exile of those who opposed him. The aim of this project is to theorize *confino* and its spaces, functions, surveillance mechanisms, and modes of resistance in order to reveal how the *confinati* respond to the regime’s politics of exile. At times, their actions reveal the extent to which they are constrained to an unproductive existence in an equally sterile space, while, at other times, their actions reveal the ability to develop a productive politics capable of successfully opposing the tyranny of the fascist regime. Thus, I propose that we examine the *confino* experience through the following categories: restriction, resistance, and (re)construction. I argue that the *confinati* and those who narrate and represent the *confino* experience understand and respond to the repressive politics of the fascist regime through these three categories,

ultimately articulating an experience of exile that finds its locus in space, the body, and language.

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¹ A version of Chapter 3.1 is forthcoming in *The Cinema of Ettore Scola*, edited by Rémi Lanzoni and Edward Bowen (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2020).

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Introduction

Between the years of 1926 and 1943, Benito Mussolini utilized the institution of *confino* to exile political and societal undesirables to remote and hard-to-reach locations in Italy. The Fascist regime sentenced approximately 15,000 Italians to *confino politico* and between another 25,000 to 50,000 to *confino comune*,² the aim of which, I will argue, was to shape the space of Italian society in order to carry out social engineering. While there are numerous memoirs documenting the experience of *confino* and the events leading up to exile, perhaps the most famous work related to this phenomenon is Carlo Levi's *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, the chronicle of his year living in *confino* amongst the peasantry of the South. The novel's importance for Italy's "Southern Question," or the idea that Italy's South has been or is "backward" with regard to its northern counterpart, cannot be overstated, yet investigations into how this work theorizes the space of *confino* and the experience of exile are less common. This dissertation takes this notion as its starting point, with the aim of theorizing how *confino* and its spaces, functions, surveillance mechanisms, and modes of resistance reveal how the *confinati* respond to the regime's politics of exile. Thus, I seek to demonstrate how the authors who write about *confino* represent a politics of exile in their work, as well as the ways in which spaces of *confino* become sites of productivity for the intellectuals sent to *confino*, despite the regime's attempts to immobilize them. By a politics of exile, I refer to both the extraordinary measures implemented by the Fascist regime in exiling its political opponents (coupled with the violent mechanisms and extensive surveillance apparatus

² See Michael Ebner, *Ordinary Violence in Mussolini's Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2n4.

that allowed the regime to practice a politics of this sort), as well as the way in which the *confinati* respond to their forced confinement and immobility. The portrait of the politics that emerges is one that is, at times, defeatist—relegated to a marginalized existence on Italy’s peripheries, some *confinati* find that there is no way to resist fascist biopower and break away from their immobile condition. At other times—for the intellectuals in *confino*—a politics of exile is immersed in an antifascism that is developed and practiced in response to the conditions and the environment in which the *confinati* found themselves, with an eye toward the future and a return to Italy’s political community. Thus, addressing the regime’s attempt to assert control over the bodies and minds of Italians in order to carry out both social and spatial engineering, these intellectuals found their locus of resistance in a (re)constructive politics. I use the term (re)constructive in order to call attention to the ways in which the *confinati* reclaimed the political agency they had lost in being sent to exile, as well as the ways in which their politics inspired and built new movements; these movements would build a future that would not simply restore the freedoms of the pre-Fascist era (freedom of speech, thought, press, etc.), but one that would witness the active construction of an entirely new and antifascist Italy and Europe. I propose, then, that we examine the *confino* experience through the following categories: restriction, resistance, and (re)construction. I argue that the *confinati* and those who narrate and represent the *confino* experience understand and respond to the repressive politics of the fascist regime through these three categories, ultimately articulating an experience of exile that finds its locus in space, the body, and language.

There have been numerous, important studies (especially in Italy, yet quite fewer in the United States and other English-speaking countries) that have addressed *confino*

and have served as indispensable resources for my own research, though these studies have privileged a historiographic approach, largely ignoring representations of the phenomenon in literature, film, and art, aside from references to and comments on memoirs from ex-*confinati*.³ This trend may be changing, with recent examples such as Piero Garofalo, Elizabeth Leake, and Dana Renga's *Internal Exile in Fascist Italy: History and Representations of Confinio* (2019) leading the charge. This book is a

³ Celso Ghini and Adriano Dal Pont's *Gli antifascisti al confino: Storie di uomini contro la Dittatura 1926-1943* (1971) provides a brilliant historical introduction to *confinio* and the fascist violence leading up to it, and sheds light on life in *confinio*, backed up by archival research. The volume also contains testimony from a limited group of ex-*confinati*, thus offering the reader a glimpse into *confinio* through first-hand accounts, although Ghini and Dal Pont do not comment on these testimonies themselves. Adriano Dal Pont and Simonetta Carolini's *L'Italia al confino. Le ordinanze di assegnazione al confino emesse dalle Commissioni provinciali dal novembre 1926 al luglio 1943* (1983) is an illuminating, four-volume text, one which painstakingly details the sentencing records of those sentenced to *confinio* throughout the fascist *ventennio*. Silverio Corvisieri's *La villeggiatura di Mussolini: Il confino da Bocchini a Berlusconi* (2005) provides an intimate look at the experience of *confinio*, including the arduous voyage to the spaces of *confinio*, and is a study that pairs especially well with the memoirs of ex-*confinati* themselves. Gianfranco Goretti and Tommaso Giartosio's *La città e l'isola: Omosessuali al confino nell'Italia fascista* (2006) sheds light on the gay men who were sentenced to *confinio*—a group of individuals whose stories, even today, are often shrouded in silence. Camilla Poesio's *Il confino fascista. L'arma silenziosa del regime* (2011) examines *confinio* and the way in which this institution dismantled the rule of law, while furthermore drawing comparisons between Italy's *confinio* and Nazi Germany's *Schutzhaft*. Michael Ebner's *Ordinary Violence in Mussolini's Italy* (2011) offers a broad introduction to the topic in English, a welcoming contribution to a subject for which information in English is surely lacking with regard to its Italian counterpart. Ebner examines Mussolini's Italy through the lens of violence, understood both as the physical blow and the institutional violence of confinement, coercion, intimidation, discrimination, etc. Illaria Poerio's *A scuola di dissenso: Storie di resistenza al confino di polizia (1925-1943)* (2016) adheres to Alberto Jacometti's assertion that *confinio* was essentially "una scuola di antifascismo" and demonstrates how the *confinati* were able to remain politically and intellectually active, despite the regime's attempts to immobilize them. Her study focuses specifically on the experience of *confinio* in the political colonies, located on small islands, and also utilizes extensive archival research in order to provide an even clearer picture of life in *confinio* and the mechanisms and personnel driving the decision making at these sites, while also affirming that the actions of the *confinati* symbolically contributed to the construction of the Italian Republic.

groundbreaking addition to the topic of *confino*, as it is the first to fully tackle the representation of *confino* in novels, memoirs, and cinema. Before the publication of this study, representations of *confino* outside of memoirs had been largely ignored, or simply relegated to anecdotes in the text or to footnotes. Garofalo, Leake, and Renga examine not only the most famous works connected to *confino*, but also lesser-known texts, thus helping to share stories that have received little public and academic attention, while also giving space to queer representations of *confino*. The culturalist approach taken by the book's authors contributes to our understanding of how representations of *confino* affect the collective memory surrounding Italy's Fascist era, as well as the way in which the representational strategies utilized in these texts reveal common themes that exemplify the *confino* genre.

The aim of my work is not so much to provide an overview of everyday life in the *confino* colonies and various sites of *confino*, as previous studies have already done a fine job of synthesizing this. Rather, my dissertation aims to build on the informative scholarship of these previous studies, seeking to place literature and film in dialogue with political philosophy and theory. I believe that *confino* is a subject that lends itself well to political philosophy and critical theory, and thus I draw on the work of Michel Foucault (*History of Sexuality*; "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias"; *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*; *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at The Collège de France, 1975-1976*), and Giorgio Agamben (*Homo Sacer*) in my examination of biopolitics, space, repression, and resistance. Biopolitics is a particularly useful concept to utilize in examining *confino*, as it is one that takes the management of life as its central aim. To quote Michel Foucault,

Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become *vital*. It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men to be killed.⁴

The Fascist regime, in order to propagate and ensure the survival of the Italian race, oversaw the political death of those who threatened this objective: the antifascists and those who the regime deemed unworthy of being a part of the Italian race.⁵ *Confinò* is a measure that is embodied in Foucault's axiom "make live and let die":

I think that one of the greatest transformations the political right underwent in the nineteenth century was precisely that, I wouldn't say exactly that sovereignty's old right – to take life or let live – was replaced, but it came to be complemented by a new right which does not erase the old right but which does penetrate it, permeate it. This is the right, or rather precisely the opposite right. It is the power to "make" live and "let" die. The right of sovereignty was the right to take life or let live. And then this new right is established: the right to make live and to let die.⁶

The rejection of the body of the *confinato* is epitomized in the attempt to let die, although it is also complemented by the right to make die, understood in both a political and biological context. Furthermore, space plays a key role in the political death of the *confinati* and the regime's nation-building attempts, as exile to remote areas of Italy reveals the attempt to quarantine the regime's rejected bodies in equally rejected parts of the nation.

Indeed, an analysis of space—its restrictive properties, its productive, transformational potential, and the way in which the *confinati* move in and interact with

⁴ *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, Translated by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 137. Emphasis mine.

⁵ Although the *confinò di polizia* took aim at a wide stratum of society (communists, socialists, gay men, Romani, common criminals, and many others), this dissertation mainly examines the *confinati politici*.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*, translated by David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 241.

space—is at the heart of my dissertation. The space of *confino* is unique in that, while it is still a detentive, carceral space, it drastically differs from the space of the prison cell in that it amounts to an open-air prison,⁷ one that projects an illusion of freedom. It is, according to Carlo Rosselli, “una grande cella senza muri, tutto cielo e mare. Funzionano da muri le pattuglie dei militi. Muri di carne e ossa, non di calce e pietra.”⁸ Both Foucault’s concept of the heterotopia and Agamben’s analysis of the state of exception and the camp figure into my theorization of the space of *confino*, as well as the way in which we may consider *confino* as a form of internal colonization. Although I believe we must differentiate the space of *confino* from the space of the concentration camp, the epitome of the state of exception, I argue that the biopolitical logic constituting the construction of these spaces is similar. While my theorization of the space of *confino* may borrow elements from both Foucault and Agamben, I believe that we must move beyond the arguments they make, for their theory seems to offer either a qualified interpretation of the mechanisms of resistance or one that outright denies the possibility of resistance.

For the Fascist regime, spatial engineering was inextricably linked with social engineering; through *confino*, we witness the attempt to marginalize and expel those individuals who were considered unproductive (politically, intellectually, sexually) in the eyes of the regime to equally unproductive spaces, historically cut off from the rest of the nation. Space also plays a role in fascism’s surveillance apparatus, as even architecture was configured in a way that would facilitate the regime’s spying. Despite fascist

⁷ Celso Ghini and Adriano Dal Pont, *Gli antifascisti al confino: Storie di uomini contro la Dittatura 1926-1943* (Milan: PGreco, 2013), 46.

⁸ Carlo Rosselli, “Fuga in quattro tempi,” *Scritti politici e autobiografici*, (Naples: Polis Editrice, 1944), 38-39.

repression and spatial restriction, I argue that the *confinati* succeeded in transforming the space of *confini* into a productive space, thus subverting the power dynamics inherent in a carceral space.

Even prior to the implementation of *confini*, space played an important role in the rise of fascism and in antifascist resistance. Indeed, Tom Behan notes that in the first six months of 1921, the fascist *squadristi* targeted and “destroyed 59 *case del popolo*, a key organising centre for the left.”⁹ This type of violence has a very precise aim, one that it is not rooted in gratuitous violence, but rather in the attempt to halt antifascist organizing and remove the left’s ideology from public spaces, making room instead for fascism’s own ideology to swoop in and dominate. This strategy paid off for the fascists; by mid-1922, Behan notes that

Fascism was now dominant in the ‘red belt’ of central Italy – for example Bologna was occupied by 20,000 blackshirts for five days. In essence fascists now had physical control over whole towns and cities – only fascists could hold meetings, not the left. Control over public spaces has far more importance in this period, before television, radio and the internet. And, given that illiteracy was widespread, political argument was largely carried on face to face.¹⁰

Thus, fascist violence—through the destruction of space and the subsequent control over it—becomes a way to halt productivity understood in political and intellectual terms. The antifascist resistance to this initial repression would also rely on the control over space, resulting in clashes like that seen in Parma of August 1922, which would come to be known as the “Fatti di Parma.” In this episode of history, Italo Balbo and the fascist *squadristi* marched on Parma where they were met with resistance from the militant antifascist *Arditi del popolo*. The *Arditi*—in constructing defensive structures such as

⁹ Tom Behan, *The Resistible Rise of Mussolini* (London: Bookmarks, 2003), 44.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

barricades and trenches—succeeded in halting the progress of the fascists and driving them from the city. Years later, the successful resistance in Parma was celebrated through the birth of the phrase “Balbo, t’è pasé l’Atlantic, mo miga la Perma.” That is, while Balbo succeeded in traversing an entire ocean, the popular resistance in Parma would not allow him to cross even a single stream, thus underlining the efforts of the combatants on the barricades in a David-and-Goliath-like situation. One of the leaders of the *Fatti di Parma*, Guido Picelli (an antifascist politician with the *Partito Socialista Italiano*—PSI) would even be sent to *confino* on the islands of Lipari and Lampedusa. The control over space and restricting its access to others would continue to be crucial for fascist repression following 1922 and would subsequently be important for antifascist resistance in *confino*, as I will demonstrate in the subsequent chapters of my dissertation.

In Chapter One, “Illness and Expulsion,” I provide a historical-theoretical introduction, in which I offer, first of all, a brief history of *domicilio coatto*, the precursor to the fascist *confino*, and the ways in which it was used as a political instrument to suppress those who espoused ideas that were considered threatening to the state and Italian society. Thus, I consider the *Legge Pica* of 1863, which was originally created with the intention of halting brigandage, but would also affect a wide range of individuals. I also examine the metaphor of the body politic in Italian history, as it will be appropriated by Mussolini during the *ventennio* to justify the regime’s violent policy and actions. In the second part of this chapter, I examine Mussolini’s speeches and the way in which he adopted medical rhetoric and pathologized his political opponents. In doing so, I argue that he is able to justify their expulsion from the political community; they are no

longer part of the citizenry, but infections that need to be removed in order to guarantee the health of the nation.

My analysis in Chapter Two, “The Space of *Confinio*,” is centered around how space is represented in *confinio* and how the *confinati* engage with and move through space in the works I examine. I first examine how Italy’s colonial projects can be compared and contrasted with *confinio* and show how *confinio* is a form of surgery, whereas the construction of New Towns is a form of grafting. I briefly consider both internal and external colonial projects, while arguing that *confinio* can be read as another form of internal colonization. The two main works I analyze in this chapter are Cesare Pavese’s *Il carcere* (1948) and Carlo Levi’s *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (1945). Previous studies of Pavese’s *Il carcere* have rejected much of the political significance of the novel; I argue that, on the contrary, we cannot deny the political gravity of the work, which may be uncovered when the text is read through a spatial key. Indeed, I argue that Pavese utilizes the phrase “la quarta parete” to intentionally draw a comparison between the protagonist’s unproductive experience in *confinio* and the productive image ascribed to Libya as “la quarta sponda.” From here I move to Carlo Levi’s *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, which I approach through Michel Foucault’s concept of the heterotopia. I specifically posit that *confinio* is a space that lies somewhere between the Foucauldian heterotopia and the Agambenian camp in order to extrapolate on the political death of the *confinato*, while also utilizing these concepts to better theorize the space of *confinio* itself. If *confinio* is represented as a space of death, it does not preclude the opportunity to develop a productive politics and to engage in resistance, an idea that Levi demonstrates in various sections of his novel.

In Chapter Three, “Gay Men and *Confinio*,” I take up Ettore Scola’s *Una giornata particolare* (1977) and Luca De Santis and Sara Colaone’s *In Italia sono tutti maschi* (2008) to reflect on the connection between race, gender, and sexuality and their significance for *confinio*. My focus centers on the gay men who were sent to *confinio* and the ways in which their political death contributed to the perceived construction of a “pure” fascist race. My analysis of Scola’s film focuses on the surveillance apparatus of the regime while tying this into a fascist biopolitics. I argue that Scola reveals the surveillance apparatus of the Fascist regime to be one that was malleable, relying both on the power of architecture (epitomized in the design of the Palazzo Federici) and what Foucault would define as panopticism, ultimately ensuring that the regime’s surveillance apparatus asserted its presence in all spaces, both public and private. In the second part of this chapter, I take a closer look at the relationship between politics and race, and specifically the way in which we can connect gender and sexuality to the concept of race, understood both in the biological and the cultural sense. The versatile format of *In Italia sono tutti maschi*—a graphic novel—lends itself well to an analysis of gender and sexuality in a way that privileges the body’s role in politics. It is precisely because of the spatial organization of the graphic novel’s panels and its ability to isolate specific concepts due to artistic choices that the reader is able to examine the relevance of the body for fascism’s politics of exile.

Despite being subject to a politics of death, the intellectuals in *confinio* do not abandon their antifascist politics while in exile. Thus, in Chapter Four, “Organizing in *Confinio*,” I examine historical accounts of resistance in the works of former *confinati* such as Alberto Jacometti (*Ventotene*, 1946), Emilio Lussu (*La catena*, 1930) and Altiero

Spinelli (*Il lungo monologo*, 1968), among other accounts and representations. A prominent notion in my reading of these texts is that confinement emerges as indispensable preparatory work for the antifascist resistance and the birth of the Italian Republic and that the way in which the *confinati* transform and develop organizational space is crucial to this work. In the second part of this chapter, I consider Wu Ming 1's recent novel *La macchina del vento* (2019), the story of Erminio, a young socialist exiled on the island of Ventotene. The title is a play on H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (*La macchina del tempo*), and thus I unpack the complicated relationship between politics, resistance, and temporality. Furthermore, I argue that *La macchina del vento* contributes to the origin myth of the Italian Resistance, depicting it as one that began not in 1943, but well before, and one that centers resistance in *confinio* as crucial to the work to be done following the fall of fascism in Italy and in the aftermath of World War II.

The theorization of an antifascist and united Europe is at the heart of Chapter Five, "Theorizing and (Re)constructing the New Italy and Europe," where I consider Carlo Rosselli's *Socialismo liberale* (1930) and radio speech "Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia" (1936), as well as Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi's *Manifesto di Ventotene* (1941, first draft). While much attention has been given to reading in *confinio*, less so has been given to the importance of writing. My analysis delves into the rejection of the nationalism that gave rise to Europe's totalitarian states, while underlining the importance of pan-European solidarity in the face of fascism and the ways in which the experience of exile influenced these authors' visions of a united Europe. I maintain that writing in *confinio* is not only a philosophical meditation, but an active form of resistance based on the development of a (re)constructive politics that would provide direction to various

antifascist movements. I additionally examine accounts of the reactions to the fall of the fascist regime and argue that, for the *confinati*, true (re)construction and healing begins not only with the collapse of the Fascist government, but also with the erasure of its legacy through the eradication of its symbols and thus the shaping of public spaces (a discussion that is quite relevant for the present-day United States and its remaining monuments to the Confederacy).

This dissertation is informed by ongoing debates—both within academia and in mainstream politics—regarding approaches to antifascism in everyday society. In breaking with the majority of the previous studies of *confino*, my work integrates cultural, aesthetic, and theoretical approaches alongside close analyses of disparate types of texts. I do not limit myself solely to the study of texts that deal with life in *confino* itself, but rather include juridical statutes that formed the legal organization of Italy, political speeches and statements, novels, memoirs, and film, ranging from texts that were published shortly after the end of the authors' experience in exile to those that were published as recently as 2019. Some may question why I have chosen to include witness accounts of *confino* and representations of the phenomenon in the same space—that is, how can I reconcile the writing of those who *lived* the experience of *confino* with those who represent it in novels, films, and other forms of art? One reason is that the past is never truly finished, as the systemic forms of violence that I examine in this dissertation have simply mutated or at least present themselves in different forms. Indeed, in order to practice a successful antifascist politics, it is necessary to maintain a double gaze on the past and the present, an idea that those writing about *confino* in the present day understand very well. There is, of course, something to be learned from both those who

have witnessed and experienced *confino* and those who choose to represent the experience in a fictional manner; that is, in including both testimonies and fictional representations of *confino*, we can identify a number of advantages, as well as limitations. The witness accounts of *confino* have the advantage of being told by those whose bodies bear the memory of their experience, a corporal impression of the violence and restriction inherent in the politics of exile. Thus, what emerges is a highly personal testimony of historical events. However, given the very subjective nature of memoirs, the narrative recounting of events that emerges is dependent on the authors' own experiences and motivations, which may not necessarily be separated from emotional ties to the event or experience and subsequent traumas. Thus, we must take care to not accept any one account as universal for all who experienced the event. As Piero Garofalo, Elizabeth Leake, and Dana Renga note, the memoirs of the *confinati* are varied and thus resist consensus with regard to collective memory.¹¹ On the other hand, fictional representations of *confino* have the advantage of being cultural artifacts that represent exile in more popular formats, which in turn allows more people to learn about the history of *confino* in an accessible manner. Through metaphors, symbolism, and fantastical elements, these representations allow us to examine and theorize an experience that contributes to our understanding of the past in a way that an historical account may not. As the fascist *confino* ended in 1943, we will soon need these fictional representations to ensure that the stories of the *confinati* continue to be told, and, in some cases, to lend a voice to those whose stories were never told. Fictional accounts, too, are

¹¹ Piero Garofalo, Elizabeth Leake, and Dana Renga, *Internal Exile in Fascist Italy: History and Representations of Confinio* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 4-5.

subject to the whims and motivations of their authors, and there are certainly ethical implications and a certain sense of responsibility to be considered in telling the story of someone else (or manipulating the veracity of the event).

In juxtaposing witness testimonies and fictional accounts of *confino* in my dissertation, then, I am not concerned with uncovering the “truth” of the *confino* experience, to the extent that a universal truth is even definable and can be represented in these stories, fictional or not. In an age in which far-right politics, white nationalism, and xenophobia are on the rise, representations of the past—be they memoirs or contemporary fiction—are of the utmost importance in order to critically examine historical manifestations of fascism and the carceral, punitive, and genocidal spaces it creates and to ensure that we are successfully equipped to fight back. Thus, both historical accounts and fictional accounts may provide us with a model to examine in developing our own antifascist politics, and one that may help us to “rise to the occasion” in times of crisis or difficulty.

Chapter One Illness and Expulsion

Chapter 1.1 History of *Confino*

In the *Discorso dell'Ascensione*, delivered to the *Camera dei deputati* in May of 1927, Benito Mussolini states, “Terrore, signori, questo? No, non è terrore, è appena rigore. Terrorismo? Nemmeno, è igiene sociale, profilassi nazionale, si levano questi individui dalla circolazione come un medico toglie dalla circolazione un infetto.”¹² He is speaking about the practice of *confino*, or the forced peripheral exile of the Italians who were opposed to the Fascist regime, including communists, socialists, gay men, Romani, common criminals, and many others. While this practice was a form of social—and spatial, I would argue—engineering, it is the heir of a similar practice: *domicilio coatto*,¹³ a practice of forced relocation, which was introduced in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century in order to repress devious behaviors. In this chapter, I lay out the history of *domicilio coatto* before subsequently returning to Mussolini’s speeches and the regime’s national security policy, through which I argue that biopolitical power lays the groundwork for fascist violence and restriction.

From the beginning, *domicilio coatto*, introduced in the *Legge Pica* of 1863,¹⁴ was a preventative measure tied to space, bodies, and societal norms. In post-Unification Italy, the *Legge Pica* was presented as a defensive measure against armed resistance in the South, while also targeting various other groups of common criminals through

¹² Benito Mussolini, *Opera Omnia*, Vol. 22, 378.

¹³ See also Leonardo Musci, “Il confino di polizia. L’apparato statale di fronte al dissenso politico e sociale,” *L’Italia al confino: le ordinanze di assegnazione al confino emesse dalle Commissioni provinciali dal novembre 1926 al luglio 1943*, vol. 1, edited by Adriano Dal Pont and Simonetta Carolini (Milan: La Pietra, 1983), XXII, and Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, 46-73.

¹⁴ Regio Decreto 15 agosto 1863, n. 1409.

domicilio coatto. The origins of this measure predate the unification of Italy: as Lorenzo Benadusi states, “Le basi del domicilio coatto si possono [...] rintracciare nella legge di polizia del regno di Sardegna del 1859 che attribuisce ai governatori di provincia (prefetti) il potere di negare, dopo la liberazione dal carcere del condannato per oziosità o vagabondaggio, la dimora in certi luoghi e potenzialmente in quasi tutti.”¹⁵ The origin of the measure, then, cannot be ascribed solely to the attempt to curb political dissent in the South following Italy’s unification in 1861, but rather, as Paul Garfinkel states, to address a “long-term threat to cementing Liberal rule: common crime.”¹⁶ The *Legge Pica*, then, and specifically the instrument of *domicilio coatto*, criminalized poverty and posited idlers and vagrants as forms of contagion, who needed to be quarantined in order to protect and foster society as a whole. It is important to note that the threat is not necessarily framed in terms of what it would take away from society, but instead in terms of what it lacked to provide for society. That is, the threat is viewed as such precisely because it is incapable of fostering life. In exploring this focus on life, I turn to Michel Foucault and the concept of biopolitics. Foucault sees a change in the role of power in the second half of the eighteenth century, which comes to represent the norm in nineteenth century, citing “power’s hold over life [...] the acquisition of power over man insofar as man is a living being, that the biological came under State control, that there was at least a certain tendency that leads to what might be termed State control of the biological.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Lorenzo Benadusi, “Il domicilio coatto contro oziosi, vagabondi e omosessuali,” *Il domicilio coatto: Ordine pubblico e politiche di sicurezza in Italia dall’Unità alla Repubblica*, edited by Ernesto de Cristofaro (Acireale-Rome: Bonanno Editore, 2015), 196.

¹⁶ Paul Garfinkel, “A Wide, Invisible Net: Administrative Deportation in Italy, 1863-1871,” *European History Quarterly* 48.1 (2018): 5.

¹⁷ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 239-240.

This new power did not address the individual man, man-as-body, as Foucault says, but rather man as an overall mass, man-as-species. In contrast to the sovereign power, then, which allowed the sovereign to take life, the concept of biopolitics was related to “a set of processes such as the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population, and so on,”¹⁸ a concept of power that would make life. Thus, rather than acting as the “bringer of death,” the role ascribed to the sovereign, the State functions as the “bringer of life.” In legislation, then, we see a preoccupation with productivity and the threats to building a productive nation, in both political and economic terms.

Furthermore, with this change in the function of power, we also witness a change in language. The language utilized in the text of the *Legge Pica* includes various medical metaphors; indeed, we must not forget that the full name of the measure was *Procedura per la repressione del brigantaggio e dei camorristi nelle regioni infette*. Moreover, Article 1 of the law also refers to “Provincie infestate dal brigantaggio,” and a decree issued just over a week later would clarify which provinces in the South were “infested” with brigandage.¹⁹ This language portrays Italy as a sick body: if various regions in the South represent infection, then the State must undertake measures to eliminate or quarantine the infection, as we see laid out in the text of the *Legge Pica*. The medical metaphor and the image of the sick body will be adopted again by the fascist regime and will become an important component in many of Mussolini’s speeches, justifying his own practice of deportation: *confino*.

¹⁸ Ibid., 243.

¹⁹ See Regio Decreto 20 agosto 1863, n. 1414. The provinces declared to be infested with brigandage were Abruzzo Citeriore, Abruzzo Ulteriore II, Basilicata, Benevento, Calabria Citeriore, Calabria Ulteriore II, Capitanaata, Molise, Principato Citeriore, Principato Ulteriore, and Terra di Lavoro.

Under this law, those found guilty of brigandage would be subject to execution by firing squad or subject to forced labor.²⁰ The law furthermore introduced *domicilio coatto* for the first time in post-Unification Italy, applied to those deemed to be dangerous to society, such as idlers (*oziosi*), vagabonds (*vagabondi*), those suspected of working with the brigands (*manutengoli*), camorristas (*camorristi*), and general suspicious peoples (*persone sospette*). *Domicilio coatto* is laid out in Article 5 of the law, which states “Il Governo avrà inoltre facoltà di assegnare per un tempo non maggiore di un anno un domicilio coatto agli oziosi, ai vagabondi, alle persone sospette, secondo la designazione del Codice penale, non che ai camorristi e sospetti manutengoli.” A council made up of the *prefetto*, *presidente del tribunale*, *Procuratore del Re*, and two *Consiglieri Provinciali* was responsible for determining who would be sent to *domicilio coatto*. According to the *codice penale* in effect in 1863 when the Legge Pica was promulgated,²¹ *oziosi* were defined as “coloro i quali, sani e robusti, e non provveduti di sufficienti mezzi di sussistenza, vivono senza esercitare professione, arte o mestiere, o senza darsi a stabile lavoro,”²² while *vagabondi* were defined as “coloro i quali non hanno nè domicilio certo, nè mezzi di sussistenza, e non esercitano abitualmente un mestiere od una professione.”²³ The goals of the *Legge Pica* were simple: while the law aimed to strike down any

²⁰ See Article 2 of the *Legge Pica*. Those punished with forced labor could be subject to this penalty for life (in the case of armed resistance) or for a temporary, unspecified period of time.

²¹ In post-Unification Italy, the *Codice penale sabaudo per il Regno di Sardegna* (1859) was in effect up until the issuance of the *codice penale italiano* of 1889, or the so-called *Codice Zanardelli*. For more on criminal law in Liberal Italy, see Paul Garfinkel, *Criminal Law in Liberal and Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

²² *Codice penale per gli stati di S.M. Il re di Sardegna* (Turin: Stamperia Reale, 1859), 136.

²³ *Ibid.*, 137.

opposition to the newly-formed liberal Italy, it furthermore sought to shape and control individuals who exhibited behaviors that the government deemed to be deviant, with the goal of addressing Italy's own backwardness when compared to its northern European counterparts.²⁴ It was, in short, an exercise in nation-building and an experiment in “making” Italians.

With the inclusion of Article 5 in the *Legge Pica*, then, the government is emphasizing productivity as one of society's virtues and criminalizing those who are inherently unproductive. Indeed, in reading an annotated version of *codice penale sabaudo*, we note that *oziosi* and *vagabondi* are criminalized precisely because of their perceived lack of productivity and contribution to society:

Chiunque, benchè atto a lavorare vive senza lavoro, dovendo naturalmente essere a carico degli altri, oltre di dare lo spettacolo disonesto d'un disutile e perditempo, toglie alla società l'utile che ne verrebbe dalla sua fatica, ed è minaccia di gravi danni [...] L'ozioso è per la pena eguagliato al vagabondo; entrambi peste d'ogni civile società.²⁵

Here, *oziosi* and *vagabondi* are considered to be both “threats” to and a “plague” of civil society, which need to be eliminated so that Italy could participate in modernization.

Productivity—as well as reproductivity—would become important components as the newly formed Italian state engaged in nation building.²⁶ In fascist Italy, both productivity and reproductivity would also become concerns of the State (with certain forms of

²⁴ Garfinkel (“A Wide, Invisible Net”) writes, “Pica’s promoters claimed that they were merely following the precedent set by Britain – a powerful invocation in a legislature full of anglophiles who revered their northern neighbour as the ‘classic land of liberty’ and the model on which the Kingdom of Italy should be built” (19).

²⁵ *Codice penale italiano. Annotato per Vincenzo Cosentino*, third edition (Naples: Gabriele Sarracino, 1863), 298.

²⁶ For a discussion of (re)productivity and biopolitics in post-Unification Italy, see Rhiannon Noel Welch, *Vital Subjects: Race and Biopolitics in Italy* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016).

productivity being cause for punishment), a concept to which I will return later.

Domicilio coatto, then, was not simply a tool utilized to address and defeat criminality, but rather a strategy for shaping the new Italian population. As Benadusi notes, “In questo modo si creano le premesse per punire non più l’autore di un’azione criminale ma un “tipo” umano percepito come pericoloso, deviante, anormale o marginale.”²⁷ The goal of Liberal Italy (through *domicilio coatto*), then, while not explicitly stated in the *Legge Pica*, was to shape the Italian race through its control over bodies.

At the heart of *domicilio coatto* was the explicit attempt to control both space and bodies. While assigned to *domicilio coatto*, individuals were subject to constant surveillance by the *Ufficio di Pubblica Sicurezza* and were required to make their presence known to this office whenever it was requested,²⁸ unable to leave the town to which they had been confined,²⁹ only permitted to move about a restricted area within the town during limited hours of the day,³⁰ and subject to articles 112 and 113 of the *legge di pubblica sicurezza* 3720/1859,³¹ which stated that *coatti* must always carry their residence cards issued by the local office of *pubblica sicurezza*, and were prohibited from carrying weapons and frequenting certain individuals. Individuals were furthermore prevented from working as boatmen and from utilizing boats for any reason, one stipulation for which we can assume the goal was to prevent any attempt of escaping.³² Furthermore, the penal colonies were often located in hard-to-reach, remote areas, many

²⁷ Benadusi (“Il domicilio coatto”), 198.

²⁸ See Article 19 of the Regio Decreto 25 agosto 1863, n. 1424.

²⁹ See Article 17 of the Regio Decreto 25 agosto 1863, n. 1424.

³⁰ See Article 20 of the Regio Decreto 25 agosto 1863, n. 1424.

³¹ See Article 24 of the Regio Decreto 25 agosto 1863, n. 1424.

³² See Article 18 of the Regio Decreto 25 agosto 1863, n. 1424.

of which were islands.³³ The locations to which the *coatti* were exiled is certainly a question of national security; being hard-to-reach furthermore presupposes the idea that the colonies would be hard to escape, to say nothing of the intense security measures in place to conduct surveillance on the *coatti*. In situating the colonies in extremely isolated and inaccessible areas, then, those subject to *domicilio coatto* were effectively placed under quarantine. If certain individuals are exposed to a disease or illness (let us recall that *oziosi* and *vagabondi* were referred to as plagues on civil society), measures must be taken in the name of national security to contain the illness and prevent its spread. We witness, then, a strong commitment to borders, whether they are those that divide the islands from the rest of Italy, or those that divide the colony and its residents from the *coatti* themselves. This type of quarantine, then, is implemented to guarantee the health and safety of the general population. To better understand this, it is useful to consider Michel Foucault's discussion of quarantine in *Discipline and Punish*, in which he writes about seventeenth-century plans and "measures to be taken when the plague appeared in town," the purpose of which "is to sort out every possible confusion: that of the disease, which is transmitted when bodies are mixed together; that of evil, which is increased when fear and death overcomes prohibitions."³⁴ The spread of "disease" is central to the idea of *domicilio coatto*, and the rhetoric of infection surrounding this topic is the concept through which exile, quarantine, and surveillance are justified. In this same chapter, Foucault notes the distinction between the goals of the "exile of the leper" and the "arrest

³³ Garfinkel ("A Wide, Invisible Net"), notes that, although there were initially no regulations that stipulated where the *coatti* were to be sent, evidence points to islands around the Tuscan archipelago and the Sicilian coast as sites of penal colonies (31).

³⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 195 and 197.

of the plague.” He writes: “The first is that of a pure community, the second that of a disciplined society.”³⁵ I believe, however, that we cannot make a distinction between the leper and the plague; in the politics of exile, they are the same, and thus the political goals of a pure society and of a disciplined society are intertwined. In fact, Foucault notes that “[t]hey are different projects then, but not incompatible ones.”³⁶ To reach these goals, then, surveillance becomes a defense mechanism not only in maintaining a disciplined society but also in assisting in the purification of society. Thus, we are speaking of social cleansing through the removal and thus the “death” of the other.

The institution of *domicilio coatto* requires us to ask a provocative question: if these individuals were deemed to be dangerous elements of society, and thus unfit to reside in certain areas of the country, what does this say about the place of the remote areas where the penal colonies were located in the newly-formed Italian nation, and what was their role in “making” Italians? Garfinkel suggests that one of the main goals of *domicilio coatto* was rehabilitative in nature,³⁷ and we can certainly understand this point of view through the stipulation that required a *coatto* to declare his intended occupation and place of residence within ten days of arrival,³⁸ thus encouraging him to become a “productive” member of society, yet this does not explain why those individuals deemed to be a threat to society were not permitted to inhabit certain areas of the country, while they were, at the same time, allowed to be “free” in others after having been relocated. Indeed, it is peculiar to consider what rationale could exist for assembling a group of

³⁵ Ibid., 198.

³⁶ Ibid., 199.

³⁷ Garfinkel (“A Wide, Invisible Net”), 19.

³⁸ See Article 14 of the Regio Decreto 25 agosto 1863, n. 1424.

alleged criminals to live in the same location among the previous residents.³⁹ If certain individuals were considered to be a threat to other residents, and thus had to be removed from their presence, what does this tell us about the residents of the towns to which the *coatti* were exiled? Perhaps these residents were viewed as equally backward or unproductive with regard to the *coatti* who were sent to live among them. As many of these colonies were located on the geographical margins of Italy, we may venture to guess that the residents of these locations would be also relegated to the margins of Italy's nation-building project.

In the subsequent years, *domicilio coatto* would continue to be used as a weapon for nation building. The *Legge Pica* was renewed in 1864, extending the maximum duration of *domicilio coatto* from one to two years.⁴⁰ Article 10 of the law, which included the application of *domicilio coatto*, only remained in effect until April 30 of the same year.⁴¹ Paul Garfinkel notes that, after the expiration of *domicilio coatto* in April of 1864, lawmakers celebrated its success, legitimizing the institution and setting the foundation for its future use:

by declaring *domicilio coatto* a grand success, they framed the measure as an indicator of national strength rather than weakness, no small consideration for a ruling elite covetous of great-power status for Italy. Most important, the pronouncement of victory helped to ensure that *domicilio coatto* would be called upon again.⁴²

³⁹ For a discussion of the threat of grouping together perceived criminals in these colonies, see Giovanna Sciuto, "I mezzi di cui si servono i governi dispotici." Il domicilio coatto e le 'acerbe opposizioni' della dottrina e della pubblica opinione," *Il domicilio coatto: Ordine pubblico e politiche di sicurezza in Italia dall'Unità alla Repubblica*, 141-144.

⁴⁰ See Article 10 of the Regio Decreto 7 febbraio 1864, n. 1661

⁴¹ Articles 2-8 of the above-mentioned law were renewed for 1865. See Daniele Fozzi, *Tra prevenzione e repressione. Il domicilio coatto nell'Italia liberale* (Rome: Carocci, 2010), p. 61-62.

⁴² Garfinkel (2018), 20.

In 1865, for example, *domicilio coatto* was included in the *Legge sulla sicurezza pubblica*,⁴³ thus extending the measure to the territories beyond those originally included in the *Legge Pica* of 1863. The next year, in 1866, as the war with Austria was inevitable, *domicilio coatto* was extended to “persone indiziate di voler restaurare l’antico ordine di cose o nuocere in qualunque modo all’unità dell’Italia.”⁴⁴ Thus *domicilio coatto* was a prophylactic measure, one that would ensure that those who would do harm to Italy, its people, and its institutions would face administrative deportation in the name of national security. The focus, then, was not on individual crimes per se, but rather on a certain “type” of person who posed a threat to the normal order of things,⁴⁵ with each revision, extension, and variant giving the government more power to define deviancy in an increasingly subjective manner. In 1871, la legge 6 luglio, n. 294 extended the amount of time that a repeat offender could be subject to *domicilio coatto* to five years. *Domicilio coatto* would eventually evolve and grow more powerful in the latter half of the nineteenth century, absorbing increasingly more deviant “types” into its categorization of society. Benadusi writes,

L’ampia genericità della definizione di oziosi e vagabondi finisce per permettere di applicare il domicilio coatto anche a altre forme di asocialità e in particolar modo a coloro che vengono ritenuti pericolosi per la pubblica moralità. Oltre alla prostituzione le misure di prevenzione tendono, quindi, a colpire i comportamenti sessuali considerati devianti, cercando di tutelare la famiglia in quanto cardine dell’ordine sociale.⁴⁶

⁴³ See Allegato B of the Legge 20 marzo 1865, n. 2448.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Adriano Dal Pont, *I lager di Mussolini. L’altra faccia del confino nei documenti della polizia fascista* (Milan: La pietra, 1975), 19.

⁴⁵ Benadusi (“Il domicilio coatto”), 198.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 199.

Given that there was no specific article that criminalized gay men,⁴⁷ the government relied on the ambiguous language of the law to punish anyone who threatened the norms of society in post-Unification Italy. Thus, *domicilio coatto* morphs from an institution responsible for punishing criminals into an institution designed to shape Italians and eliminate all types of deviancy.

In 1889, under the government of Francesco Crispi, the new *Testo unico delle leggi di pubblica sicurezza* (TULPS) took aim at an even broader spectrum of the public.⁴⁸ It is important to note that the new *codice penale* of 1889 no longer considered *oziosità* and *vagabondaggio* to be crimes, while these were still punishable (through *domicilio coatto*) under the new TULPS.⁴⁹ By removing *oziosità* and *vagabondaggio* from the penal code while naming them in the TULPS of the same year, the government set a precedent for dealing with any sort of nonconformity, whether this existed within the confines of the criminal code or not. Through this contradiction, we furthermore understand that the goal of the State in this case is not to punish, but rather to assert its control over bodies. Indeed, in describing the change in the role of power that came about in the seventeenth century, Michel Foucault argues that there are two forms: the first, *anatomo-politics of the human body*, constitutes power over the body as a machine; the second, *bio-politics of the population*, is concerned with power over the species body—that is, the body as a biological entity.⁵⁰ With regard to our discussion of *oziosità* and *vagabondaggio*, we are dealing with the first form of power. The body is to be used as a

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Regio Decreto 30 giugno 1889, n. 6144

⁴⁹ See Benadusi (“Il domicilio coatto”), 196-197.

⁵⁰ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 139.

tool of productivity that will further Italy's status as a new, capitalist state in the late nineteenth century. If the body is not utilized in the production of economic value, it can be tossed aside. In considering the locations to which the *coatti* were sent (Cagliari, Lipari, Pantelleria, Tremiti, Ustica, Lampedusa, and Favignana, among others),⁵¹ it is apparent that these individuals were confined to locations that were already cut off from the mainland and the economic hubs of Italy. Thus, two Italies were being created: one that aimed to thrive as a modern, capitalist nation, and another that came about as a result of the government's effort to discard its unproductive citizens. It is a way to allow these individuals to live within Italian society, but only on the margins: unproductive subjects may only exist in equally unproductive spaces where there is no threat to Italy's nation-building project.

At the same time, we must consider the idea that only certain types of productivity were permissible. The new public security laws included regulations concerning public assembly, which effectively served to quell political dissent. Article 2 of Titolo I, Capo I of the TULPS states:

Qualora, in occasione di riunioni o di assembramenti in luogo pubblico o aperto al pubblico, avvengano manifestazioni o grida sediziose che costituiscano delitti contro i Poteri dello Stato o contro i Capi dei Governi esteri ed i loro rappresentanti, ovvero avvengano altri delitti preveduti dal Codice penale, le riunioni o gli assembramenti potranno essere sciolti e i colpevoli saranno denunciati all'autorità giudiziaria.⁵²

The article is purposefully vague with regard to what constitutes a crime against the State or individual government politicians, but this served to punish any opposition to Liberal Italy, including, as Ilaria Poerio notes, socialists, republicans, anarchists, and

⁵¹ See Sciuto, 142-144.

⁵² *Legge sulla pubblica sicurezza, approvata con Regio Decreto 30 giugno 1889 coordinata col nuovo Codice penale* (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice, 1889), 3.

irredentists.⁵³ Political organizing—intended to be a productive endeavor—is not so in the eyes of the Liberal government, and is instead seen as a threat to its existence, one that would also need to be eradicated.

The TULPS of 1889 furthermore allowed the government to capture a wider spectrum of individuals who it perceived as a threat through its reliance on its own citizens. In addition to punishing *oziosi* and *vagabondi*, the public security laws established *diffamati*—those who were known by the public to be perpetrators of a wide range of crimes such as personal injury, threats, and resistance to public authority, among others—as a danger to society. Articles 95-96 declare that these individuals only need to be denounced by the “*pubblica voce*” in order to be subject to *ammonizione*. In these articles, we see the advent of lateral surveillance—that is, citizen-to-citizen surveillance. Mark Andrejevic describes lateral surveillance as “peer-to-peer monitoring, understood as the use of surveillance tools by individuals, rather than by agents of institutions public or private.”⁵⁴ One is at once both a subject under surveillance and one who may perform surveillance on others. In this way, the government—through the information procured by its citizens—is able to assert its omnipresence in society. With the creation of the TULPS of 1889, then, the public did not have any way of knowing when or by whom they were being watched and were required to remain vigilant at all times. In considering this, we must reflect upon Foucault’s notion of panopticism, an internal surveillance mechanism that—through its disciplinary power—may also assist in fulfilling the

⁵³ Ilaria Poerio, *A scuola di dissenso: Storie di resistenza al confino di polizia (1925-1943)* (Rome: Carocci editore, 2016), 32.

⁵⁴ Mark Andrejevic, “The Work of Watching One Another: Lateral Surveillance, Risk, and Governance,” in *Surveillance and Society* 2.4 (2004): 488. I am grateful to Daniel Grinberg who pointed me to lateral surveillance.

biopolitical aims of a nation. This notion is derived from Jeremy Bentham's idea of the Panopticon, a type of prison that would maximize the efficiency of surveillance, specifically through the idea that a prison inspector would be able to observe a detainee without being observed himself. Bentham imagined that, through the structure of the prison (through the power of architecture, itself), he would possess a new psychological tool, referring to the practice of panopticism as "A new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example."⁵⁵ We may compare the idea of the Panopticon to the omnipresence of God himself. Indeed, the name given to this structure (deriving from Greek), roughly translates to "all seeing." Outlining the structure of the Panopticon, Bentham writes,

The building is circular. The apartments of the prisoners occupy the circumference. You may call them, if you please, the *cells*. These *cells* are divided from one another, and the prisoners by that means secluded from all communication with each other, by *partitions* in the form of *radii* issuing from the circumference toward the centre, and extending as many feet as shall be thought necessary to form the largest dimension of the cell. The apartment of the inspector occupies the centre; you may call it if you please the *inspector's lodge*.⁵⁶

Although it would be impossible for the inspector to observe all prisoners and all cells at the same time, the structure was designed in a way that would render it impossible to determine whether or not one was under surveillance, thus soliciting complacency at all times. Indeed, Bentham writes "perhaps it is the most important point, that the persons to be inspected should always feel themselves as if under inspection, at least as standing a great chance of being so."⁵⁷ In this way, then, each detainee must consider the weight of the "*apparent omnipresence* of the inspector" combined with the "extreme facility of his

⁵⁵ Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings* (London: Verso, 1995), 31.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

real presence.”⁵⁸ With regard to public security in Italy in the late 1800s, the Panopticon ceases to be a physical structure and evolves into a free-roaming apparatus through the possibility of being denounced by the *pubblica voce*. Indeed, Foucault writes,

[T]he Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building: it is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use.⁵⁹

Foucault recognizes the malleability of the panopticon and its ability to additionally function in spaces outside of the penal dimension: “The panoptic schema, without disappearing as such or losing any of its properties, was destined to spread throughout the social body; its vocation was to become a generalized function.”⁶⁰ The non-specificity of this mechanism, coupled with its dynamic and ever-changing nature, is what makes it so effective. Surveillance is no longer confined to a single space, nor a single, central observer. It is a many-headed hydra with an infinite ability to regenerate.

After the TULPS of 1889, Italy would not see another reform of this nature until the fascist regime takes power.⁶¹ In another moment of nation building that called for the making of Italians, this time the New Fascist Man, Mussolini’s regime had a blueprint to which it could turn. As Celso Ghini and Adriano Dal Pont write, “Forzando l’interpretazione delle leggi esistenti, modificandole gradualmente e creandone delle nuove, i fascisti fornirono agli organi esecutivi dello Stato gli strumenti per la

⁵⁸ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 205.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 207.

⁶¹ Ernesto De Cristofaro, “Introduzione: il domicilio coatto e la biografia di una nazione,” *Il domicilio coatto: Ordine pubblico e politiche di sicurezza in Italia dall’Unità alla Repubblica*, 19.

persecuzione in massa dei propri avversari politici.”⁶² Surveillance and the subjugation of bodies through internal exile would allow Mussolini to shape space and society in an attempt to construct a fascist utopia.

Chapter 1.2 Fascist Surgery and *il Confino di Polizia*

After the fall of fascism, philosopher Benedetto Croce would refer to the *ventennio* as a parenthesis in Italy’s history, seemingly exculpating the Liberal government of post-Unification Italy of its role in facilitating the rise of fascism in the country. In an article published in the *New York Times* on November 28, 1943, Croce rejects the specificity of fascism in Italy. He writes, “if fascism has shown itself in a violent form in Italy it is not exclusively an Italian fact, but as tendency, effort, aspiration, expectation, it has spread throughout the world.”⁶³ While we can acknowledge that fascism did, indeed, spread to other countries, we must not reject the history and conditions that shaped the Italian particularities of this phenomenon. Croce would have us understand fascism to be an “infection,”⁶⁴ an outside force that made its way into the confines of the Italian border, corrupting the country and its citizens. Croce utilizes fascism’s own medical metaphor regarding the illness plaguing Italy and appropriates it in an attempt to justify his parenthesis theory: if fascism was a sickness that befell Italy, then the Liberal government and the Italian people could be excused of any blame that may be placed upon them for the rise of fascism. That is, according to Croce’s reasoning, fascism was a virus that infected the country, and would need to simply run its course in

⁶² Celso Ghini and Adriano Dal Pont, *Gli antifascisti al confino: 1926-1943. Storie di uomini contra la Dittatura* (Milan: PGreco, 2013), 20.

⁶³ Benedetto Croce, “The Fascist Germ Still Lives,” *New York Times*, 28 Nov. 1943, p. 45.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

order to be eradicated. At the same time, Croce notes that the ideology of fascism still presents a threat to Italy, even if it lies dormant. But it is precisely the infrastructure erected by the Liberal government following Unification, through their attempts to engage in nation building and “make” Italians, that gave rise to fascism. Indeed, Stanislaw Pugliese writes that “The economic, moral, and political roots of Italian fascism were to be found in a failed Risorgimento and in the corrupting influence of Giolitti’s *trasformismo*.”⁶⁵ Thus we should not understand Italian fascism to be a pathogen that took hold of the country, but rather a part of its own body that materialized with the birth of unified Italy itself.

It is evident even in the early years of fascism that the movement utilized language similar to that used in the prior century to justify *domicilio coatto*. Medical metaphors pervaded the speeches of prominent fascist leaders, which functioned to legitimize the biopolitical power employed through fascism.⁶⁶ Mussolini’s use of these various metaphors and his concern with the health of the nation was already evident by the time of the March on Rome, which would result in the political ascension of the National Fascist Party (PNF). Indeed, in the *Discorso di Udine*, delivered in preparation for the Fascist March on Rome about a month prior to the event, Mussolini speaks of Rome in medical terms: “E noi pensiamo di fare di Roma la città del nostro spirito, una città, cioè, depurata, disinfettata da tutti gli elementi che la corrompono e la infangano; pensiamo di fare di Roma il cuore pulsante, lo spirito alacre dell’Italia imperiale che noi

⁶⁵ Stanislaw Pugliese, *Carlo Rosselli: Socialist Heretic and Antifascist Exile* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 181.

⁶⁶ See also Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, 64-65.

sogniamo.”⁶⁷ Mussolini refers to both a politics of life, as well as a politics of death,⁶⁸ through the specific language he utilizes in his speech; if Rome is to become the “pulsating heart” of Italy, the lifeline of the country, then all of its negative elements must be eradicated. He continues, “Qualcuno potrebbe obiettarci: ‘Sieti voi degni di Roma, avete voi i garretti, i muscoli, i polmoni sufficientemente capaci per ereditare e tramandare le glorie e gli ideali di un impero?’”⁶⁹ The answer to this question, of course, is that yes, Mussolini and the fascists will come to represent the epitome of health: indeed, one must only think of the propaganda that shows Mussolini toiling away in the fields, or the fact that Mussolini had numerous children. We can think of fascism in terms of productivity, then, whether that refers to manual labor or even reproduction. Anything that was considered to be unproductive, then, was often referred to as a medical threat—as a disease—and was subject to a politics of death. Mussolini sought to, as Ruth Ben-Ghiat suggests, “remold behaviors and bodies to combat domestic decadence and achieve international prestige.”⁷⁰ This is how the Duce is able to justify fascist violence; fascist violence is not gratuitous, as he claims that of the Bolsheviks to have been.⁷¹ Fascist violence is simply the response to a disease: “quando la nostra violenza è risolutiva di una situazione cancrenosa, è moralissima, sacrosanta e necessaria.”⁷² Yet Mussolini is

⁶⁷ Mussolini, *Opera Omnia*, Vol. 18, 412

⁶⁸ When we speak of a politics of death, it should be clear that we are not necessarily speaking of murder, but rather, as Foucault writes, “every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death of some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on.” See *Society Must Be Defended*, 256.

⁶⁹ Mussolini, *Opera Omnia*, Vol. 18, 412.

⁷⁰ Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 413.

⁷² *Ibid.*

careful not to paint his violence as a negative violence: “La violenza che non si spiega deve essere ripudiata. C’è una violenza che libera, e una violenza che incatena; c’è una violenza che è morale ed una violenza che è stupida e immorale.”⁷³ Fascist violence, then, is framed as a positive violence: it is a violence that brings freedom and thus nurtures life, rather than disavow it. Despite this framing, it is precisely through the disavowal of some forms of life (a politics of death), through the very binding and seizure of their liberty, that fascist life is able to endure. Mussolini is able to carry out a politics of death through fascist violence because he does so in the liminal and ambiguous zone of the sovereign sphere, “the sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice, and sacred life—that is, life that may be killed but not sacrificed—is the life that has been captured in this sphere.”⁷⁴ Mussolini, as head of state, acts as the sovereign, who simultaneously exists both inside and outside of the law through his “legal power to suspend the validity of the law.”⁷⁵ In this case, Mussolini’s actions regarding the use of violence constitute a suspension of the law, and furthermore force us to consider Max Weber’s reflections on violence in his seminal essay titled “Politics as a Vocation.” Weber writes:

Today [...] we have to say that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory. Note that ‘territory’ is one of the characteristics of the state. Specifically, at the present time, the right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it. The state is considered the sole source of the ‘right’ to use violence.⁷⁶

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 83.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁶ Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated and edited by H.H Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 78.

Mussolini, then, is the sole arbiter of what is considered just violence and the conditions that permit the use of force. As the state monopolizes the legitimate use of force, it may determine its use in whichever situations it finds applicable.

In 1925, Alfredo Rocco, Italy's Minister of Justice at the time, would express a similar idea regarding the suspension of law, although his words do not hide the regime's undeniable move toward a full dictatorship:

Anche il fascismo crede che occorra garantire all'individuo le condizioni necessarie per il libero sviluppo delle sue facoltà [...] Ma ciò non perchè riconosca un diritto dell'individuo alla libertà, superiore allo Stato, da farsi valere contro gli interessi stessi dello Stato, ma perchè crede che lo sviluppo della personalità umana sia un interesse dello Stato [...] [È] chiaro un normale sviluppo della vita individuale è necessario allo sviluppo sociale. Necessario, ma purchè sia normale; un enorme e disordinato sviluppo di alcuni individui o gruppi di individui sarebbe per la società ciò che è per l'organismo animale l'enorme e disordinato sviluppo di alcune cellule: una malattia mortale.⁷⁷

Rocco proposes that liberty for the individual can only be a feature of fascism insofar as it serves the interests of the State and is considered "normal." Of course, the State serves as the only arbiter in the debate regarding what is considered normal and what is considered, instead, abnormal, and thus a threat. The interests of the State inform the development of the individual, which in turn yields a healthy society; however, if the development of the individual is not in line with the qualities prescribed by the State, it is marked as cancerous to society, thus providing the rationale for the justification of fascist violence. In Rocco's speech, one can observe the regime's commitment to prophylactic measures; the idea is to halt any sort of abnormal development before it grows into a full-blown disease that would threaten the existence of the Fascist regime. While we certainly

⁷⁷ Alfredo Rocco, *La dottrina del fascismo e il suo posto nella storia del pensiero politico* (Milan: La periodica lombarda, 1925), 15.

see this practice throughout the *ventennio*, we can also observe its prominence in electoral politics prior to this speech and prior to the dissolution of all other political parties. The Acerbo Law, passed in 1923, assured that the party or coalition that received the largest amount of votes—as long as they received at least twenty-five percent of the total vote—would take control of two-thirds of the seats in parliament (the other third of the seats was to be split proportionally among the other parties). The law was obviously constructed to give Mussolini and the PNF enduring and irrepressible power in parliament, and we can furthermore read this move as an example of prophylactic politics; the law assured that opposition in parliament could never grow into a true “disease” that would threaten the power of the fascists.

The regime subsequently furthered its prophylactic measures for political gain and the control of bodies in Italian society.⁷⁸ In 1926, with the issuance of the new public security law, the *confino di polizia* was born.⁷⁹ The law shares many characteristics with the application of *domicilio coatto* in Liberal Italy. Furthermore, the decision to be sent to *confino* rested with few people, and the process was entirely unjust. Michael Ebner writes,

The provincial police commissions who passed *confino* sentences consisted of the prefect, who served as president, the police chief (*questore*), senior officers from the *carabinieri* and the MVSN, and a magistrate (*procuratore del re*), whose presence provided a veneer of judicial oversight. Occasionally, the Fascist *federale*, the provincial party boss, would sit in. Following an incident, arrest, or investigation, the *questore* presented his *confino* recommendation along with the results of an investigation to the commission. The *carabinieri* officer also submitted a report and a recommendation. The police chief and *carabinieri* official thus served as accuser and

⁷⁸ Garofalo, Leake, and Renga also note that the various assassination attempts on Mussolini would provide an “*ex post facto* rationalisation for repressive legislation” (52).

⁷⁹ Regio Decreto 6 novembre, 1926 n. 1848. See the Appendix for the full text of this law. See also articles 180-189 of the 1931 TULPS (Regio Decreto 18 giugno, 1931 n. 773, also included in the Appendix) for updates/clarifications regarding the 1926 law.

judge. The individual proposed for *confino di polizia*, who was granted no defense, could be arrested before or after the commission made its decision but was not usually present or even aware of the proceedings. The commission recommended the length of the sentence, ranging from a minimum of one year to a maximum of five years, but there was no limit to the number of times the sentence could be renewed if the individual did not show signs of “rehabilitation.”⁸⁰

Thus, we may surmise that anyone could be sent to *confino* for virtually any reason. As Poerio writes, “Giacché l’essere ritenuti sospetti equivale all’essere ritenuti pericolosi e pertanto suscettibili di deportazione, tutti possono in qualsiasi momento essere privati della libertà.”⁸¹ This, of course, violates the rule of law, specifically the principle of *nullum crimen sine lege* (no crime without law).⁸² The reasons given could, furthermore, be unverified, considering that the accused did not have any sort of opportunity to plead their case. Even in cases in which individuals were tried by the commission and not sentenced to *confino*, they could be subject to *ammonizione*, “which required an individual to adhere to a curfew, report to the police every morning, and not arouse ‘suspicion,’ and police ‘warnings’ (*diffide*), which officially informed an individual that he or she was under police investigation and surveillance.”⁸³

We can unequivocally state that Liberal Italy’s policy of *domicilio coatto* paved the road for future fascist violence through the institution of *confino*. Indeed, many of the penal colonies that existed under *domicilio coatto* would continue to be utilized under the fascist *confino*.⁸⁴ Yet the fascist *confino* would have its own unique footprint, different from that of *domicilio coatto*. In Mussolini’s Italy, *domicilio coatto* would be expanded

⁸⁰ Ebner, 60. See also Camilla Poesio, *Il confino fascista. L’arma silenziosa del regime* (Rome: GLF Editori Laterza, 2011), 26-29.

⁸¹ Poerio, 52.

⁸² Poesio, 11.

⁸³ Ebner, 62.

⁸⁴ See Poesio, 16-21 and Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, 71.

under *confino*, which was divided into two categories: *confino comune*, reserved for common criminals and *confino politico*: the more well-known form of *confino* that was applied to those who were categorized as opponents of fascism. My dissertation concentrates on the latter category of *confinati* and the representations and testimonies of their experiences. This category included groups such as socialists, communists, anti-fascists, and various intellectuals, but it later applied to gay men, who were considered a moral threat to Italian society and a threat to the fascist regime and its idea of the fascist “New Man,”⁸⁵ the virile, masculine symbol of fascist Italy. Under the TULPS of 1926, the *confinati* were marginalized not only through their deportation, which was a way “to remove potential subversives from a familiar environment where their presence could have a deleterious effect on others,”⁸⁶ but also through the rules they had to follow while in *confino*. Article 190 of the decree stated that *confinati* could be prohibited from frequenting public establishments and any sort of public gathering or event. In this way, *confinati* are treated as a contagion and must not be allowed to participate in the public sphere. It is, again, a way of developing borders within borders.

When considering what “type” of Italian was sent to *confino*, we can return to the idea of productivity that was evident in the decrees issued in Liberal Italy. The idea of productivity is employed through the biopower the regime exerts over its subjects. For Mussolini and his own form of biopolitics, there is undoubtedly a certain form of what can be called *positive* productivity and another, contrasting form that we can call *negative*

⁸⁵ See Lorenzo Benadusi, *The Enemy of the New Man: Homosexuality in Fascist Italy*, Translated by Suzanne Dingee and Jennifer Pudney (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

⁸⁶ Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, 59.

productivity. Positive productivity was evident in the dictator's preoccupation with the health and fertility of the Italian population and its birth-rates. In 1927, for example, he launched the "battle for births," which ultimately proved to be unsuccessful.⁸⁷ On the other side, we see examples of what the regime would consider negative productivity, such as political action that would threaten the power of the fascists. We can compare this to Rocco's statements about individual liberty in society: if productivity is not enacted in a way that serves the interests of the state, it must be eliminated. Indeed, we cannot forget the famous remark purportedly spoken by the prosecutor at Marxist philosopher and communist Antonio Gramsci's trial: "We must prevent this brain from functioning for twenty years."⁸⁸ Thus, Gramsci was punished precisely to halt his own productivity and to keep him from developing a philosophy and politics opposed to fascism. With Gramsci's imprisonment, then, we see not only a form of biopower that achieves the "subjugation of bodies and the control of populations,"⁸⁹ but also a form of power that seeks to achieve the subjugation of minds. It is important to note that the PNF had its own thinkers and intellectuals, such as Giovanni Gentile, who played an integral role in the philosophical development of fascism throughout its duration. While it has been argued that there was popular consensus for Mussolini and fascism,⁹⁰ we must also recognize

⁸⁷ For an in-depth discussion of fertility and birth-rates in fascist Italy, see Christopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy Since 1796* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), 469-474.

⁸⁸ See Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 1, edited by Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 88.

⁸⁹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Vol. 1*, 140.

⁹⁰ Perhaps the most notorious argument comes from Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il duce: Gli anni del consenso, 1929-36* (Turin: Einaudi, 1974).

that through the subjugation of bodies and minds, fascist violence, intimidation, and the politics of exile, the regime was able to construct popular consensus.

In Mussolini's *Discorso dell'Ascensione*, delivered to the *Camera dei deputati* on May 26, 1927, the dictator affirms his control over both the bodies and minds of Italians, once again taking up the medical metaphor to justify fascist violence as it relates to the physical health of the population and the threat that political dissidents pose to the country. He splits the speech into three parts: the physical health of the nation and the "race," the administrative structure of the government, and the political directives of the State. In this section, I will analyze the first and third parts of the speech. The biopolitical proclivities of his speech are quite evident; when speaking about the Italian race, Mussolini states that the questions of health "sono importanti non solo per i medici di professione, non solo per coloro che professano le dottrine della sociologia, ma soprattutto per gli uomini di Governo."⁹¹ If the State is concerned with health issues, then Mussolini—as the head of State—is the physician responsible for eradicating these problems: he will later state in the speech "Io sono il clinico che non trascura i sintomi."⁹² For Mussolini, the biological must be a concern of the State: in this part of the speech, he talks about social diseases and health issues facing Italy such as pellagra, tuberculosis, and tumors, among others. In order to prevent the spread of these diseases, Mussolini affirms that the state has strengthened "la difesa sanitaria alle frontiere marittime e terrestri della nazione."⁹³ As Barbara Spackman notes in her analysis of the same speech,

⁹¹ *Opera Omnia*, Vol. 22, 362.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 367.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

the solution to an external threat is simply to assure that it remains just that—external.⁹⁴ Yet for Mussolini, a healthy nation is not simply one that is free from disease; a healthy nation is productive, especially in biological terms. As Mussolini moves to demographic policy, we understand how (re)productivity is a virtue, and how those who are deemed to not be productive enough are punished: “Di qui la tassa sui celibi, alla quale forse in un lontano domani potrebbe fare seguito la tassa sui matrimoni infecondi.”⁹⁵ For the regime, demographic power is the key to a healthy nation; as the population grows, so does fascism, and so does the national security of Italy. It is a politics of life in which every child born is the embodiment of the Fascist New Man.

In the third part of the speech, Mussolini outlines the political actions of the fascist state: freedom of press is crushed, and all antifascist political parties have been dissolved, but it is not enough. These are merely instruments of dissent, tools utilized by the opposition to organize against and combat fascist ideology. In order to truly allow for a politics of life in fascist Italy, the bearers of these tools must also be eradicated. Let us return to the quote from the beginning of this chapter: “Terrore, signori, questo? No, non è terrore, è appena rigore. Terrorismo? Nemmeno, è igiene sociale, profilassi nazionale, si levano questi individui dalla circolazione come un medico toglie dalla circolazione un infetto.”⁹⁶ In contrast to demographic power, then, power that would ensure the security of Italy’s borders and serve its imperialistic goals through a large and powerful military,⁹⁷ *confino* is framed as a measure to be implemented in order to expel an infected body from

⁹⁴ Barbara Spackman, *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Social Fantasy in Italy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 146.

⁹⁵ *Opera Omnia* Vol. 22, 364

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 378.

⁹⁷ Spackman, 144.

its borders. Mussolini's words furthermore echo the themes evident in the *Discorso di Udine*. The dictator's violence is not "terrorism"; it is a moral violence that frees and cleanses Italy by removing an infection from its borders.⁹⁸

Let us consider, then, the significance of the locations chosen for *confino*. If the *confinati* were "removed from circulation" like an infection, we are forced to consider that the locations chosen as *confino* colonies exist in a sort of liminal space; while they may be a part of Italy in a geographical sense, we can argue that they existed external to the rest of Italy in every other sense, whether that is political, economic, or something entirely else. The expulsion of the *confinati* is not, however, a threat of assassination; the power exercised over the *confinati* lies not necessarily in the ability to take life, but rather to let die. It is true that in the colonies themselves the *confinati* lived in sordid conditions; Alberto Jacometti, who was interned on the island of Ventotene, writes that the dwellings of the *confinati* were infested with bugs: "Molto più grave è l'affare delle cimici. Quei grani di caffè che non si possono in alcun modo sradicare. Prima di morire, d'inverno, ti riempiono la branda, il comodino da notte, gli scaffali, le mensole, le sedie, i tavolini, i libri, perfino i libri, sì, di lendini."⁹⁹ Michael Ebner furthermore reports that *confinati* with tuberculosis and syphilis were not separated from the otherwise healthy detainees.¹⁰⁰ Thus the biological threat of detainment cannot be overlooked. Yet the language Mussolini utilizes in his speech forces us to look beyond solely biological death. Foucault

⁹⁸ For more commentary on social hygiene, see David G. Horn, *Social Bodies: Science, Reproduction, and Italian Modernity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 46; and Spackman, 143–55.

⁹⁹ Alberto Jacometti, *Ventotene* (Genoa: Fratelli Frilli Editori, 2005), 85. For more information on lodging and daily life in *confino*, including commentary on daily routines, see Ghini and Dal Pont, 73–87.

¹⁰⁰ Ebner, 106.

speaks of “political death,” which is certainly the case for the *confinati*, but the question of space is crucial to our discussion. We can argue, for example, that those who were considered enemies by the regime could have suffered both a biological and a political death that was carried out in the location where they resided. Yet, the significance of exile for the *confinati* is already one that implies death, manifest in the nature of these spaces themselves. One need only think of Carlo Levi’s description of his experience as a *confinato* in the town of Aliano in his autobiographical novel *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

The locations to which the *confinati* were exiled, then, were chosen not only for their history as former penal colonies, but also due to their existence in a space that is at once Italy and another world entirely. In order to arrest the thought and the activism of dissidents like Levi and others, that is, to freeze them in a state of unproductivity, the regime had to exile their enemies to equally unproductive areas, cut off not only from the rest of the Italy, but from the concept of history altogether. This is a notion that is expressed by those who were exiled to both the mainland *confino* sites like the one to which Levi was sent and by those who were confined to the island colonies. Alberto Jacometti, interned on the island of Ventotene, also portrays the colony as a place that is cut off from history and civilization. Speaking of the boat that arrives twice a week, Jacometti writes “Ci porta, il battello, le novità, ci porta l’aria di fuori, il ricordo della civiltà. Che, a parlare francamente, di civiltà, a Ventotene, ce n’è pochina pochina.”¹⁰¹ Jacometti writes that the boat brings items such as newspapers (if not left on a previous island) and mail (if remembered) to the island. *Confini*, then, is a place where the

¹⁰¹ Jacometti, 62.

concepts of time and history exist only through the contact that others bring with the rest of Italy. In confining Italians to these areas, that is, in restricting their participation in time and history, the regime reduced them to purely biological subjects, for they lived outside of the political community.

In *Homo Sacer*, Giorgio Agamben notes that the Ancient Greeks had two words for life: *zoē*, which constitutes the aforementioned biological life, and *bios*, or political life.¹⁰² The *homo sacer* is a figure that has been reduced to bare life—that is, a biological being whose natural existence is politicized through an inclusive exclusion. The *homo sacer*—in our discussion the *confinato*—is the form of natural life that has been excluded from the political realm while simultaneously being caught in it. Agamben writes, “He is pure *zoē*, but his *zoē* is as such caught in the sovereign ban and must reckon with it at every moment, finding the best way to elude or deceive it. In this sense, no life, as exiles and bandits know well, is more “political” than his.”¹⁰³ This is what the *confinato* comes to represent: he is at once exiled from the political community and included within it as the subject of the ban, all while dwelling in a space that is both internal and external to Italy. This space is more accurately the “camp,” the space which opens when the state of exception (the sovereign’s temporary suspension of law) becomes the rule,¹⁰⁴ although we may note some differences between the space of *confino* and the Agambenian camp. As we have seen, the practice of forced internal exile in Italy began as an emergency measure to combat brigandage in the South following Unification. Across many years,

¹⁰² See Agamben, 1.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 183-184.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 168-169.

however, the practice became more and more prevalent, and in fascist Italy it is no longer the exception, but the norm:

What had begun as a temporary suspension of civil rights instead established permanent sequestration spaces beyond the rule of law. *Confinati* were defined by the exceptional laws and, therefore, beyond the boundaries of the legal system. In essence, they were citizens deprived of citizenship. Bereft of their basic rights, they lost agency over their lives. As such, *confino* was a manifestation of Fascism's biopolitics, in which the deprivation of citizens' political rights created a liminal space to administer extrajudicial sanctions.¹⁰⁵

Thus, the Fascist regime, in equating its political opponents to illness and disease, is able to convert a temporary exception into a law, which allowed them to sequester the bodies of their political opponents and immobilize their speech, thoughts, and actions by confining them to equally immobile areas in Italy. Through this politics of exile, the *confinati* are stripped of their political agency and reduced to bare life, while their expulsion from the political community presents an opportunity for the regime to participate in nation building. In the next chapter, I will explore the spaces of *confino* themselves in an attempt to theorize the space itself and analyze the ways in which the *confinati* react to the environment around them.

¹⁰⁵ Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, 65.

Chapter Two The Space of *Confinio*

2.1 Reflections on *Confinio* vs. Internal Colonialism

If we are to consider *confinio* in medical and hygienic terms, we must also examine Italy's public health and colonial projects (both internal and external) of the fascist era. I argue that *confinio* itself may be considered a form of internal colonization, albeit one with goals that differ from other colonial projects. I would like to begin this chapter by looking at *confinio* in terms of space; later in this chapter, I will examine space as it relates to the *confinati* and the ways in which they interact with this space and are restricted by and through it.

In order to understand fascism and its social engineering project, it is necessary to examine the regime through the lens of space. As Ellen Nerenberg writes,

Fascism operates, some will say, by way of an abuse of power and by steadily curtailing access to social reproduction by limiting access to space. The creation of the twelve New Towns of the Agro Pontine, their architectural and urban design, and their role in internal immigration during the *ventennio* lends support to this claim.¹⁰⁶

In the section that follows, I would like to briefly talk about the fascist New Towns and fascism's other internal colonial projects, as I believe that their construction—when confronted with the establishment of *confinio* colonies and other spaces of *confinio*—reveals some ideas about the logic surrounding internal exile and its relationship to space in fascist Italy.¹⁰⁷ If *confinio* represents a space that is conceived as inherently

¹⁰⁶ Ellen Nerenberg, *Prison Terms: Representing Confining During and After Italian Fascism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 11.

¹⁰⁷ While Luciano Previato notes that the “true and proper” colonies to which *confinati* were sent were the islands of Favignana, Lampedusa, Lipari, Pantelleria, Ponza, Tremiti, Ustica, and Ventotene, as well as the mainland colony of Pisticci, I argue that any other space of *confinio* may be considered an internal colony because of the traits I will lay out in this chapter. See Luciano Previato, *L'altra Italia. Carceri, colonie di confino, campi di concentramento durante il ventennio fascista* (Bologna: Consiglio regionale dell'Emilia

unproductive, the fascist New Towns represent the opposite for the regime, as productivity is central to the scope of their construction. While Mussolini equated the practice of *confino* with surgery, we can think of the construction of New Towns as grafting,¹⁰⁸ in that land reclamation was combined with human reclamation in order to produce the perfect fascist subject.¹⁰⁹ I propose considering these spaces as internal colonies, albeit for quite different reasons, as the scope of one is productive while the scope of the other is not. In other words, while the New Towns represent an attempt to construct a sort of fascist utopia where the fascist New Man could thrive, the foundation of *confino* colonies represents an attempt to restrict the individuals who did not align themselves with the ideology of the regime. Indeed, Federico Caprotti reads the internal colonization project of the New Towns in the Pontine Marshes as “an attempt by fascism to prove that even the most calloused anti-fascists could be transformed into good fascist citizens through inclusion in a national project far removed from central urban areas.”¹¹⁰ Therefore, the scope of the New Towns was rehabilitative and generative in its nature, while the scope of *confino* was restrictive and even surgical.

The fascist New Towns project in the Pontine Marshes, for instance, was based on land reclamation, part of the larger narrative of *bonifica integrale*.¹¹¹ Land reclamation and construction of New Towns can be read in a biopolitical key, as the regime sought to

Romagna, 1995), 35. For an overview of the above-mentioned colonies, see Poerio 69-112.

¹⁰⁸ I thank Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg for suggesting this analogy to me in a conversation we had at Rutgers University in 2015.

¹⁰⁹ Federico Caprotti, *Mussolini's Cities: Internal Colonialism in Italy 1930-1939* (Youngstown: Cambria Press, 2007), 103. See also Ebner, 135.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 171.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 83.

establish control over the relationship between Italians and the environment in which they lived,¹¹² especially in natural terms, as the marshlands in which fascism undertook its land reclamation project were wrought with malaria.¹¹³ The regime thus had to take measures to eliminate the “negative nature”¹¹⁴ of the marshes in order to establish a “civilized” environment that would be habitable for future Italian colonists. In eliminating the negative nature of the marshes, the regime was able to replace it with a new nature, one that could be considered hygienic and undoubtedly fascist. Diane Ghirardo writes that, with the construction of the New Towns and agricultural settlements, “Fascism seemed to be promising a new and bright future with up-to-date, hygienic living conditions and improved agricultural and industrial productivity.”¹¹⁵ Indeed, the eradication of mosquitos, and thus malaria, “was part of a wider technological project aimed at reclaiming the marshes in agricultural, social, and political terms.”¹¹⁶ The Pontine Marshes were thus transformed in order to create a fascist space that would be utilized to cultivate new fascist citizens. Many of the eventual colonizers migrated from North and Northeast, where there were a significant number of individuals

¹¹² In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault writes “Biopolitics last domain is, finally—I am enumerating the main ones, or at least those that appeared in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; many others would appear later—control over relations between the human race, or human beings insofar as they are a species, insofar as they are living beings, and their environment, the milieu in which they live. This includes the direct effects of the geographical, climatic, or hydrographic environment: the problem, for instance, of swamps, and of epidemics linked to the existence of swamps throughout the first half of the nineteenth century” (244-245).

¹¹³ See Frank Snowden, *The Conquest of Malaria: Italy, 1900-1962* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006).

¹¹⁴ Caprotti, 102.

¹¹⁵ Diane Ghirardo, *Building New Communities: New Deal America and Fascist Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 24.

¹¹⁶ Caprotti., 103.

suspected or convicted of anti-fascist activities.¹¹⁷ Therefore, we might speak of a “reclamation” of the Italian citizenry, as internal migration to these new fascist spaces simultaneously functioned to eradicate, or at least placate, anti-fascist sentiment in the North and the Northeast while creating a new fascist community that would occupy an integral role in the development of the New Man.

It is interesting, then, to consider the space of *confino* in relation to the fascist New Towns. *Confini* suggests the opposite strategy with regard to the individuals who were considered subversive to the fascist regime; inclusion and transformation were not viable options, and the *confinati* were, instead, entirely rejected.¹¹⁸ While the regime sought to eradicate malaria in the Pontine Marshes in order to prepare for a purified, fascist space, those exiled to *confino* were sent to areas that were, to borrow from Michael Ebner, “overcrowded, disease-ridden, awful places.”¹¹⁹ Thus it is evident that, on the one hand, Mussolini intended to cure the maladies of the nation through land reclamation and citizen reclamation in the Pontine Marshes; on the other hand, *confino*

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 124.

¹¹⁸ Interestingly, Ghirardo notes that “[d]espite the declared aim of drawing volunteer colonists for a social experiment, all too often those who answered the call ended up conscripts sent to what amounted to an internal exile” (25). However, one key difference that we may note between the internal exile of the *confinati* and the internal exile that Ghirardo describes above is the relationship individuals had with space and the environment in which they lived. The Fascist New Towns represented productivity and technological advancement and were even a “part of an administrative network to link individual farmers or workers to Fascist organizations and, through them, to national Fascist policies” (ibid.). On the other hand, the locations chosen as *confino* colonies were inherently unproductive spaces, cut off from the most industrialized, and thus productive, areas of Italy, while also serving as a sort of quarantine zone to condemn individuals to a political death.

¹¹⁹ Ebner, 103.

indicates a rejection of myriad spaces and bodies that could not possibly fit into the ideal society that Mussolini envisioned for Italy.

I would also like to briefly examine another internal colony, the EUR, in relation to Italy's planned colony in Addis Ababa, as I believe it will be useful in clarifying our definition and the goals of internal colonialism. Mia Fuller has compared EUR with Italy's planned colonial city in Addis Ababa, drawing parallels between the two and noting that they were integral parts of the regime's nation-building project. Fuller lays out the defining characteristics of colonial cities, citing Anthony D. King who writes, "the colonial city is that urban area in the colonial society most typically characterised by the physical segregation of its ethnic, social and cultural component groups, which resulted from the processes of colonialism."¹²⁰ She also includes Nezar AlSayyad's definition, in which he writes, "Colonial cities, more than other cities, serve as expressions of dominance [...] in colonial cities the relationships between the dominator and the dominated are clear, as are the political agenda and the motivations behind it."¹²¹ These are definitions that surely hold true for Italy's *external* colonies: through racism and segregation, the regime sought to create an Italian empire abroad, expelling the natives to the city's margins and effectively "whitening" the colonial towns. However, the same type of logic cannot be applied to Italy's internal colonies, such as EUR and the fascist New Towns. Fuller thus expands on the aforementioned definitions:

I would add two significant agendas that feature in the writings of Italian planners. One was the reinforcement of a 'new Italy', a national identity as a conquering and powerful Italy. This entailed emphasizing, expressing, and exaggerating both the

¹²⁰ Quoted in Mia Fuller, "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42," *Journal of Contemporary History* 31.2 (1996): 407.

¹²¹ Ibid.

constructed cultural hierarchies in the colonies and Italy's new standing on an equal footing with other colonizing nations. The other main goal was representation. The 'new Italy', in all its vigour and romance, was to represent itself through public buildings and modern zoning. And these two issues, equality with other nations and self-representation, were entirely what EUR was about.¹²²

With the construction of EUR, the regime's aim was to emphasize Italy's modernization and affirm its place among other modern countries. We would do well to keep in mind that the EUR was originally chosen as the site for the 1942 World's Fair, for which the proposed title was *le Olimpiadi della civiltà*. Fuller writes, "By hosting the Olympics of Civilizations, which were to comprise everything to do with culture and civilization, there is no question that the Italian government aimed to make a claim to equal, even superior civiltà."¹²³ This internal colony was, therefore, portrayed as the modern civilization *par excellence*. Spaces of *confino* perhaps resemble the margins of the colonial city in that they occupy a liminal space on the rejected margins of Italy. Thus, the creation of *confino* functions not to establish a new area in which a fascist utopia could be constructed, but rather one that allows the utopia to exist elsewhere in the country through the implementation of *chirurgia fascista*. It is an internal colony that is still external to the nation, yet one that must be included *within* the nation-building project in order to develop Italy's productive spaces. In the sections that follow, I will examine the role of space in two novels, Cesare Pavese's *Il carcere* and Carlo Levi's *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, and how these novels represent the political death of the *confinati*, as well as questions of productivity as they relate to colonialism and resistance.

¹²² Ibid., 407-408.

¹²³ Ibid., 408.

2.2 *La Quarta Parete vs. la Quarta Sponda: Cesare Pavese's Il carcere*

Cesare Pavese's *Il carcere* takes place in a small town in southern Italy, where the protagonist, Stefano, has been exiled to *confino*. Cesare Pavese himself was exiled to *confino* in the town of Brancaleone in Calabria from 1935 to 1936, and so the novel may be read as a sort of autobiographical account of his own time spent in exile.¹²⁴ Thus, it is necessary to consider the town as a carceral space, while delineating how various spaces of incarceration inform the experience of imprisonment. During the *ventennio*, it was quite common for political prisoners to spend time in both prison and exile, alternating regularly between the two.¹²⁵ Administratively, those who were judged and sentenced by the *Tribunale Speciale* (organized to punish crimes against the State or the regime) faced prison time,¹²⁶ while in the cases in which no crime was committed or there was not enough proof of a crime, the regime could still sentence those it considered dangerous to *confino*.¹²⁷ In the section that follows, I will analyze Pavese's *Il carcere* in terms of space and immobility in order to elucidate how the regime utilized spatial engineering to arrest the productivity of its political opponents, cutting them off from the rest of Italy in an attempt to quell any form of resistance. I draw a parallel between Pavese's reference to "la quarta parete" of his prison and Libya as Italy's "quarta sponda," and I contend that

¹²⁴ For a comment on the relationship between exile and Pavese's artistic production, see Enzo Romeo, *La solitudine feconda. Cesare Pavese al confino di Brancaleone 1935-1936* (Cosenza: Editoriale progetto 2000, 1986).

¹²⁵ Silverio Corvisieri, *La villeggiatura di Mussolini: Il confino da Bocchini a Berlusconi* (Milano: Baldini Castoldi Dalai, 2005), 16.

¹²⁶ See legge 25 novembre 1926, n. 2008. It was not possible to appeal or challenge in any other way the decision of the *Tribunale Speciale*, except in cases of review of sentence. See also Mimmo Franzinelli, *Il tribunale del duce: la giustizia fascista e le sue vittime (1927-1943)* (Milano: Mondadori, 2017).

¹²⁷ Poerio, 57.

Pavese utilizes this intentional pun to comment on discourses of productivity and space as they relate to the internal colonialism of *confino* and the colonial project in Libya.

In considering how space is depicted in the novel, one must consider what that space means for its protagonist, Stefano. All sites of exclusion are inherently “other,” and from the very beginning of the novel, the space to which those are exiled to *confino* is marked as other: “Stefano sapeva che quel paese non aveva niente di strano, e che la gente ci viveva, a giorno a giorno, e la terra buttava e il mare era il mare, come su qualunque spiaggia.”¹²⁸ This is the first line of Pavese’s novel, and in underscoring the ordinariness of the location he is inherently signifying its otherness, hinting that something is amiss in a location that should be like any other. As R. Rupert Roopnaraine notes in an article on the structure of self in *Il carcere*, “The posture is defensive, the intention one of self-reassurance. He is in the process of convincing himself that his experiences in the village will be familiar ones.”¹²⁹ We know, however, that this is not an ordinary village. It is a land of exile; it is, as the title suggests, a prison, albeit one without a physical structure or determined architecture. The sea is not simply the sea, contrary to what the narrator suggests: “Stefano era felice del mare: venendoci, lo immaginava come la quarta parete delle sua prigione.”¹³⁰ In calling the sea the fourth wall of Stefano’s prison (a site of internal exile), Pavese alludes to Italy’s fourth shore in Libya (an external colonial project), thus asking the reader to consider questions of mobility and productivity. Whereas *confino* was the regime’s surgical endeavor, the scope of the

¹²⁸ Cesare Pavese, *Prima che il gallo canti: Il carcere; La casa in collina* (Torino: Einaudi, 2017), 5.

¹²⁹ R. Rupert Roopnaraine, “Structures of Self and Art in Pavese’s *Il carcere*,” *Italian Quarterly* 66 (1973): 27.

¹³⁰ Pavese, 5.

colonial project in Libya was creative and productive. Indeed, in speaking about Libya, Mussolini stated “Civiltà, infatti, è quella che l’Italia va creando nella quarta sponda del nostro mare: civiltà occidentale in genere; civiltà fascista in particolare.”¹³¹ Colonialism in Libya, then, is a part of the ever-continuing project of “making” Italy and making Italians. Maria Antonietta Nughedu notes:

Quello che Balbo, [sic] intendeva realizzare in Libia era un progetto a lungo termine: egli prevedeva l’insediamento di ventimila coloni all’anno per un periodo di cinque anni, come primo passo per il raggiungimento, a metà secolo, di una popolazione di cinquecentomila italiani nella colonia. L’obiettivo era costituito dalla trasformazione, dei contadini senza terra del Regno, in piccoli e prosperi proprietari che avrebbero avuto il dovere di incarnare, davanti al mondo, i valori della solidarietà familiare, della dignità e dell’ordine politico, propri del Regime fascista.¹³²

In Libya, Balbo envisioned a fascist utopia that would exalt the ideals of the regime: a utopia grounded by its (re)productive potential.

If for the regime the fourth shore epitomized mobility and productivity, for Pavese’s protagonist—an immobilized *confinato* who has been stripped of his *bios*—*confinio* signifies the opposite. Stefano has been exiled from the political community and is unable to relate to those around him. The only way to make sense of his experience in *confinio* is through the equally immobile presence of nature, and specifically the fourth wall of the sea. It is the eternal crashing of the waves upon the shore with which Stefano is able to communicate, rather than with the residents of the town. This interaction with the environment around him is furthermore demarcated by carceral language; the fourth wall of the sea is: “una vasta parete di colori e di frescura, dentro la quale avrebbe potuto

¹³¹ Quoted in Mauro Piras, “Ideologia e prassi della politica indigena fascista nella Libia pacificate (1932-1940),” in *Mare nostrum: Il colonialismo fascista tra realtà e rappresentazione*, edited by Alessandro Pes (Cagliari: Aipsa Edizioni, 2012), 129.

¹³² Maria Antonietta Neghedu, “La Libia: un esempio del colonialism italiano,” in *Mare nostrum*, 226-227.

inoltrarsi e scordare la cella.”¹³³ Yet the space of the cell—the symbol *par excellence* of imprisonment—is different from the space of exile. Whereas the cell is an enclosed and barren space, exile to *confino* offers the illusion of open space and freedom (we must not forget that *confinati* were required to stay within certain parameters of the town and were not allowed to frequent public places such as *osterie*), but the presence of nature acts as a reminder of the protagonist’s imprisonment, or even as a physical barrier to freedom. Nature and natural phenomena frame Stefano’s experience in *confino*, from the contradictory essence of the sea (the fourth wall of his prison) to the sunset and sunrise, both natural clocks that indicate when Stefano is required to return to his domicile. Nature is not a liberating element, but one that contains him and exacerbates his loneliness. The sea, for example, starts to become a space that separates Stefano from the inhabitants of the town, and therefore reminds him of his otherness: “Certe volte si recava alla spiaggia, ma quel bagno nudo e solitario nel mare verde dell’alta marea gl’incuteva sgomento e lo faceva rivestirsi in fretta nell’aria già fresca.”¹³⁴ The visits to the sea underscore his isolation, reconstructing the walls of his prison. Nature in the colonies in Libya, on the other hand, was to have (re)productive value. Nughedu writes, for example, “Nella costruzione di una nuova comunità italiana sulla sponda sud del Mediterraneo, Patria, lavoro (della terra) e famiglia, [sic] dovevano costituire gli aspetti essenziali.”¹³⁵ Thus, Italy’s external colonies may be considered the diametric opposite of the *confino* colonies. Whereas life for a *confinato* was meant to be unproductive, life in the external colonies was meant to be fertile, both in terms of agricultural production and biological

¹³³ Pavese, 5.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 10.

¹³⁵ Nughedu, 227.

reproduction. For Stefano, the sea is alienating; it divides him from all others around him. Instead, for Mussolini and fascist propaganda, the sea was to be a uniting principal for the Italian empire, exemplified in the idea of *mare nostrum*.¹³⁶

The sea, however, is not the only natural element that informs Stefano's experience in *confino*; even Stefano's alienation from and inability to communicate with those around him is expressed through the analogy with an arid and unproductive nature: "quella gente e quelle parole scherzose erano remote da lui come un deserto."¹³⁷ Indeed, his experience in *confino* is constructed through constant references to the landscape, nature, plants, etc.¹³⁸ Through Pavese's use of color, we understand that nature in and around the town is a threatening essence, as well, save for the mountains in the distance: "Tutto era grigio e ostile, tranne l'aria e la distanze delle montagne."¹³⁹ It is a gloomy environment that evokes death, or rather, the absence of life—an environment from which Stefano is unable to escape: "L'immobile estate era trascorsa in un lento silenzio, come un solo pomeriggio trasognato."¹⁴⁰ Stefano's existence evokes a lack of—an exclusion from—time and space. Everything is grey, slow, and eternal; in essence, it is an unproductive existence.

Yet the space of *confino* is contradictory in its essence, in that it is not a space of *confino* for the other residents of the town; that is, the town was not born as a penal colony, and it does not function as a carceral space for the residents of the town, but it

¹³⁶ See Mussolini's speeches in Tripoli in April of 1926, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 22, 114-115.

¹³⁷ Pavese, 14.

¹³⁸ For more examples of how nature is depicted through carceral metaphors, see Tibor Wlassics, "La segnaletica strutturale nel 'Carcere' di Pavese," *Lettere italiane* 35:1 (January 1983): 90-100. See especially pp. 93-96 and pp. 98-99.

¹³⁹ Pavese, 10.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

becomes so for the protagonist of Pavese's novel. It is, however, also a space that is marked as "other" by the residents of the town, albeit in a different manner. One day, as Stefano is looking out at the sea with his friend, Giannino (a resident of the town), he asks "Non ne passano mai?" to which Giannino responds "Siamo fuori d'ogni rotta [...] anche chi passa, doppia al largo. È un promontorio di rocce scoperte. Mi meraviglio che ci passi il treno."¹⁴¹ As I have mentioned earlier, *confino* colonies were often located in hard-to-reach places. The description quoted above highlights not only the isolation of the town, but also the negative association that seems to be attached to it. The fact that those who pass by maintain a certain amount of distance between themselves and the town reinforces the idea that spaces of *confino* can be considered as sites of quarantine. While there is no rhetoric of infection or sickness like that which is evident in, say, Mussolini's speeches, or the very real malaria described in Carlo Levi's writing, Pavese makes it clear that this is a town that has been abandoned, or perhaps has never been considered, by the nation. Giannino's comment regarding his astonishment that the train comes through the town furthermore underlines the isolation of the town, both with regard to its physical location and to its detachment from the civil life of Italy. It is a part of the country that has seemingly been cut off from the history of the nation and from the political community. Indeed, in speaking about the spaces to which the *confinati* were exiled, Michael Ebner writes "there had been very little organized anti-fascism in the rural south. It was no coincidence that political exiles were not sent to Puglia, where the tradition of agricultural labor militancy rivaled that found in northern regions."¹⁴² Thus

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁴² Ebner, 133. Ebner also notes that detainees were sent to the South of Italy simply because of a lack of space (133-134).

the regime aimed to eliminate productivity in terms of political organizing, ensuring that political exiles would be restricted to the most immobile parts of the country. Yet we witness a paradoxical logic of infection, quarantine, and productivity when it comes to the South. In Mussolini's *Discorso dell'Ascensione*, he praises the South for its high birth rates,¹⁴³ while also noting that a region like Basilicata “non è ancora sufficientemente infetta da tutte le correnti perniciose della civiltà contemporanea.”¹⁴⁴ Thus, these regions are productive with regard to *reproductivity*, yet politically unproductive in that the “dangerous elements” of civilization have not entirely reached them (read: modern, antifascist politics). Furthermore, while Mussolini claims that the southern regions have not yet been infected, he nevertheless sends *confinati* there, whom he depicts as infective elements in the same speech. Indeed, as Giovanna Ceserani writes, “[f]ascist rhetoric sought to deny the existence of a Southern Question, but it nonetheless reinforced the special status of the South by choosing remote villages of the region as sites of *confino* (forced peripheral residence) to which to send the regime's political opponent, in order to remove them from social life.”¹⁴⁵ Therefore, we witness a contradiction in which the *confinati* are essentially quarantined to an “uninfected” area precisely to prevent the spread of their infectious ideology; since antifascist politics had not been developed in these areas, there was no existing foundation for political organization. At the same time, we must keep in mind the very real threat that *confinati* faced in being confined in these areas, which, as Camilla Poesio reminds us, contained “condizioni igieniche precarie”

¹⁴³ Ibid., 133.

¹⁴⁴ Mussolini, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 22, 366.

¹⁴⁵ Giovanna Ceserani, *Italy's Lost Greece: Magna Graecia and the Making of Modern Archaeology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 253.

and were “luoghi inospitali e poveri, privi di infrastrutture (fognature, ospedali, scuola strade), in zone spesso malariche.”¹⁴⁶ The regime, then, while affirming that the spread of an ideological infection was absent in these areas, nevertheless exposed the *confinati* to a very real biological threat.

In *Il carcere*, Pavese depicts the space of *confino* as an area that is to be avoided, in line with the logic of infection. In commenting on the train that passes through the town, Stefano says “Di notte fa paura, il treno. Lo sento fischiare nel sonno. Di giorno chi ci pensa? Ma di notte pare che sfondi la terrazza, che traversi un paese vuoto e abbia fretta di scappare.”¹⁴⁷ Through the personification of the train—a symbol of civilization and interconnectivity—Pavese highlights the otherness of the town and paints it as a sort of dead zone, that is, a place where life (at least with regard to *bios*) does not exist. The train—civilization (history, politics, and participation in the national community)—does not stop in the town, but simply passes through it (doing so in a hurry), symbolizing the way in which mainland sites of *confino* were forgotten pieces of Italy that were simultaneously areas that were cause for worry and areas to be avoided. On the other hand, railroads and other infrastructure, such as roads, were being constructed in Italy’s colonies in Africa, a move which signified their importance in the formation of the new Italian civilization.¹⁴⁸ Pavese’s depiction of the town to which Stefano is exiled denotes a location that is seemingly stuck in time: “Si allontanava dal paese per lo stradale che usciva, in mezzo a qualche ulivo, sui campi che orlavano il mare. Si allontanava intento,

¹⁴⁶ Poesio, 19.

¹⁴⁷ Pavese, 24.

¹⁴⁸ For more on railroads in Italy’s colonies, see Giorgio Gatti, *Le ferrovie coloniali italiane* (Rome: G.R.A.F., 1975).

sperando che il tempo passasse, che qualcosa accadesse.”¹⁴⁹ It is critical to read this text in a spatial key, specifically with regard to temporal space. While Stefano occupies a physical space that is “other,” the temporal plane in which he resides is “other,” too, in that it is immobile. It is, to borrow Foucault’s language, a “heterochrony,” or an “other time.”¹⁵⁰ In the quote above, time does not exist; Stefano and the space he occupies are immobilized. Consequentially, Stefano has difficulty in communicating with those around him and with the space (both temporal and physical) that they occupy, which he does not. In speaking about the way in which the novel presents themes of existential anxiety, Laura Nay and Giuseppe Zaccaria write that

I significati del romanzo oscillano, infatti, tra il pessimismo disincantato di una confessione autobiografica e lo sforzo di assolutizzarla, elevandola a simbolo di una condizione umana estraniata e, al limite, assurda, per un’assenza di scopi e di motivazioni che vale come cifra di una più generale e sostanziale incomunicabilità.¹⁵¹

Indeed, Stefano’s inability to communicate is at the center of the novel as he fails to connect with both the people and the space that surround him. It is precisely this type of environment to which the regime sought to exile its opponents—one that is remote and unproductive in which the opponents of the regime would not be able to organize or engage in political activity.

While the novel focuses on the experience of a political prisoner in *confino*, the narrative, at first glance, is seemingly devoid of any explicit political significance for its protagonist. Indeed, as Tibor Wlassics writes, “qui l’esiliato è un ‘politico’, ma il fatto in

¹⁴⁹ Pavese, 10.

¹⁵⁰ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” translated by Jay Miskowiec, *Architecture/Movement/Continuité* (October 1984): 6.

¹⁵¹ See Laura Nay and Giuseppe Zaccaria, “Nota al testo,” in Pavese, 113.

sé nulla contribuisce allo sviluppo dell'intreccio.”¹⁵² Instead, *Il carcere* is a novel in which one finds meaning precisely through that which is not stated. Yet, while the fact that Stefano is a political prisoner does not contribute necessarily to the development of the plot, it is still a crucial fact to keep in mind when reading the novel, as it informs Stefano's sense of exclusion throughout the narrative. It would be a mistake to entirely disregard the political element of the novel, as scholars such as Giuliano Manacorda have done: “se Stefano fosse stato costretto ad una lunga permanenza in quel piccolo paese per altri motivi, tutto si sarebbe potuto svolgere senza grandi differenze, un pretesto avrebbe valso l'altro con spostamenti di scarso rilievo.”¹⁵³ The fact of the matter, however, is that Stefano *is* confined to the town for political reasons, there are specific restrictions placed on Stefano throughout the novel because of his status as a *confinato politico*, and the choice to send *confinati* into remote areas of the South was a political decision in and of itself. Moreover, we must not forget the intentional pun on Italy's fourth shore and how it forces us to consider *confino* in relation to the regime's other colonial projects. The reasoning for Pavese's decision to exclude an explicit political plotline in his novel may be explained in a letter to his sister, written in June of 1935: “Tutti sanno che io non mi sono mai occupato di cose politiche, ma ora pare che le cose politiche si siano occupate di me.”¹⁵⁴ We may consider this statement as it pertains to our discussion of biopolitics. It

¹⁵² Wlassics, 90. See also Garofalo, Leake, and Renga: “In *Il carcere*, the protagonist Stefano is, instead, a political prisoner but here, too, the prisoner's experience as it is recounted is resolutely apolitical [...] the emphasis is decidedly on confinement not so much as a physical carceral space as a metaphorical space, one moreover, whose origins are equally (if not preponderantly) imposed by the forces internal to the character as they are by external forces such as the Fascist penal system” (96-97).

¹⁵³ Quoted in Wlassics, 93.

¹⁵⁴ See Nay and Zaccaria, 108.

is not Pavese's interest in the State and its politics that are at the center of our conversation, but rather the State's interest in its citizens and the "health" of the nation, and in maintaining this health the regime arrests the productivity of its citizens through exile. Thus, *Il carcere* is a work that reflects the environment in which the story takes place, and one that gains its meaning through a sense of exclusion, intended both as that which omits and that which is omitted.

In a passage that is easy to miss and one that is without context, Stefano is speaking with Pierino, who is a *guardia di finanza*. Pierino is talking about his nightly rounds he does for work, and Stefano says "Ma voi servite il governo," to which Pierino responds "Anche voi lo servite, ingegnere."¹⁵⁵ This quotation is a key to the text, and it is one of the reasons why we must insist on *Il carcere* as a political novel. The *confinati* served the regime through their exclusion, their relegation to oblivion, in the same way that the dissolution of all political parties and the repression of the press did; all productivity not serving the interest of the regime had to be halted. *Il carcere* is a novel that elucidates the space to which the *confinati* were exiled: a space in which resistance seems impossible. Stuck within this immobile space—one that exists outside of time—the *confinati* may only relate and react to the equally immobile elements that surround them.

2.3 Heterotopias in Carlo Levi's *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*: Restriction and Resistance

In 1935, Carlo Levi was arrested and sentenced to exile in the remote southern village of Aliano, located in Lucania, where he would remain until 1936. Subsequently,

¹⁵⁵ Pavese, 92-93.

in 1945, Levi published his seminal memoir—*Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*—detailing his experience in Aliano (called Gagliano in the book) amongst the peasantry of the South. The memoir is well known for its significance for Italy’s “Southern Question,” or the idea that the South of Italy has been historically considered “backward” in relation to the rest of the country, but its significance for *confino* has been all but ignored. In this chapter, I consider the space of Gagliano and its relation to *confino* in the writing of Carlo Levi, while arguing that the space of *confino* can be understood as one that is somewhere in between the Agambenian camp and the Foucauldian heterotopia.

Before delving into the novel, I would like to consider the space of *confino* itself. In the previous sections, I have referred to the space of *confino* as one which contains elements of the “camp” in the Agambenian sense. Here, I would like to expound upon that definition, for I believe that we must differentiate the space of *confino* from other forms of camps, such as the concentration camp or the detention center. While the biopolitical logic surrounding these camps may be the same, the ways they exist in space are dramatically different. The space of *confino* may constitute a camp in that it represents the permanent space of the state of exception,¹⁵⁶ but it is somehow “other” than the other camps, and thus we must examine the reasons for this. Michel Foucault’s concept of “heterotopia,” that is “Places [that] are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality,”¹⁵⁷ may shed some light on this. Foucault posits two types of heterotopias: crisis heterotopias (“privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and the human

¹⁵⁶ See Garafalo, Leake, and Renga, 77n46.

¹⁵⁷ Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 4.

environment in which they live, in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly, etc.”¹⁵⁸) and heterotopias of deviation (“those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed”¹⁵⁹), under which we may place *confino*. An example of a heterotopia of deviation would be the prison, although we must—just as we will do in the case of the camp—differentiate the space of *confino* from the physical structure and space of the prison.

Foucault notes that

Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. Either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications.¹⁶⁰

Entry into the space of *confino* is compulsory, just as it is for the prison and the concentration camp, yet it differs from the prison and the camp in various ways: 1. the prison and the camp have a determined architecture and a physical structure. In some ways, the space of *confino* does have a physical structure; many *confinati*, for example, lived together in barracks, yet the space of *confino* taken as a whole does not have a single, determined architecture. 2. The originary purpose of the structures of the prison or camp is carceral, detentive, or genocidal in their nature. 3. The space of *confino* occupies the same space as that which is simultaneously not the space of *confino*. That is, in many cases, there exists a community outside that which the *confinati* occupy within the same space, as is the case with Gagliano. Therefore, I would like to propose that the space of *confino* lies somewhere in between that which is constituted as the camp and that which

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.

¹⁵⁹ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 5.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 7.

is constituted as the heterotopia, which I will explore in my analysis of Levi's *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*.

The concept of space is key to Levi's narrative, starting from the incipit of the novel:

Ma, chiuso in una stanza, e in un mondo chiuso, mi è grato riandare con la memoria a quell'altro mondo, serrato nel dolore e negli usi, negato alla Storia e allo Stato, eternamente paziente; a quella mia terra senza conforto e dolcezza, dove il contadino vive, nella miseria e nella lontananza, la sua immobile civiltà, su un suolo arido, nella presenza della morte.¹⁶¹

Even before the reader catches his first glimpse of Gagliano, Levi has marked the space as simultaneously other and inaccessible. In this passage, we may note the heterotopic properties of Gagliano; Levi, who is writing from Florence between December 1943 and July 1944 (we should note, in a sort of self-imposed exile as he was hiding from the occupying Nazis),¹⁶² "travels" back to Gagliano from his own "closed world." Levi's return to Gagliano underscores the simultaneous isolation and penetrability of this space; he is able to travel to Gagliano, yes, but solely through his memory. In a way that is similar to Foucault's elaboration of the mirror as a site of heterotopia, Levi finds himself in a space that is both real and unreal.¹⁶³ Indeed, the space that Levi describes surely exists as a specific site on the physical plane of the world, yet simultaneously occupies an unreal (not to mention fractured) space within the memory of the author. Levi

¹⁶¹ Carlo Levi, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (Torino: Einaudi, 1945), 1.

¹⁶² Levi writes that he was a "rifugio alla morte feroce che percorreva le strade della città tornata primitiva foresta di ombre e di belve" (iii).

¹⁶³ See Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 4.

furthermore opens up a separate space through the representation of *confino* on the narrative page.¹⁶⁴

In the first few pages of the novel, Levi describes his arrival in Gagliano with a heavy focus on the space that surrounds him and his entrance into this space. Levi writes,

Sono arrivato a Gagliano un pomeriggio di agosto, portato in una piccola automobile sgangherata. Avevo le mani impediti, ed ero accompagnato da due robusti rappresentanti dello Stato [...] Ci venivo malvolentieri, preparato a veder tutto brutto, perché avevo dovuto lasciare, per un ordine improvviso, Grassano, dove abitavo prima, e dove avevo imparato a conoscere la Lucania.

In this passage, Levi emphasizes the passivity of his arrival in Gagliano; as Maria Pia Ellero writes, Levi is brought to Gagliano “agito («portato» come una cosa) e non agente.”¹⁶⁵ For Levi, entrance into this space is not marked by choice, nor can it be, save under specific conditions. As we will come to understand throughout the novel, the space of Gagliano is only penetrable by a select group of people, such as agents of the State. Levi even notes that those who have left Gagliano never return (although this idea is disputed at various points in the novel),¹⁶⁶ suggesting that, while it is possible for individuals to penetrate the world outside of Gagliano, it is very difficult—if not impossible—for those on the outside to penetrate the closed world of Gagliano. Although Levi is in Gagliano as a political prisoner and is unable to leave, he paints Gagliano in carceral terms for all who inhabit the town: “Questa strana e scoscesa configurazione del

¹⁶⁴ For an analysis of space and time in *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, especially as they relate to borders, see Giulio Ferroni, “Il ‘Cristo’ libro di frontiera,” *Carlo Levi: Il tempo e la durata in “Cristo si è fermato a Eboli,”* edited by Gigliola De Donato (Rome: Edizioni Fahrenheit 451, 1999), 19-27.

¹⁶⁵ Maria Pia Ellero, “Mappe dell’altrove. Luoghi e tempi in *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*,” *Italianistica: Rivista di letteratura italiana* 41.3 (2012): 35-51.

¹⁶⁶ Levi writes, “Tutti i giovani di qualche valore, e quelli appena capaci di fare la propria strada, lasciano il paese. I più avventurati vanno in America, come i cafoni; gli altri a Napoli o a Roma; e in paese non tornano più” (24).

terreno fa di Gagliano una specie di fortezza naturale, da cui non si esce che per vie obbligate.”¹⁶⁷ Thus, Gagliano is not only a space into which one may enter under forced circumstances, but also one which can only be left in this same manner. Furthermore, similar to Pavese’s novel, Levi also paints nature in a restrictive manner.

As Levi is first brought into Gagliano, he paints the town as an unnatural and alienating space in that it appears to be something other than what it actually is: “il paese, a prima vista non sembra un paese [...] mi pareva che quell’aria di campagna con cui mi appariva Gagliano, suonasse falso in questa terra che non è, mai, una campagna.”¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, Levi underlines the artificiality and falseness of Gagliano not only in terms of nature, but also with regard to its status as a carceral space: “mi pareva stonato che il luogo dove ero costretto a vivere non avesse in sé un’aria di costrizione, ma fosse sparso e quasi accogliente.”¹⁶⁹ Gagliano is alienating in this way precisely because, as a sort of open-air prison, it stands in contrast to the claustrophobic space of the prison cell, thus suggesting a sense of freedom that, in reality, cannot be obtained. Levi notes that his first impressions regarding the accessibility of Gagliano were only partially true,¹⁷⁰ however, and later passages demonstrate the ways in which his movement within the town is restricted and claustrophobic: “Volevo riconoscere i miei confini, che erano strettamente quelli dell’abitato: fare un primo viaggio di circumnavigazione della mia isola: le terre, attorno, dovevano restare, per me, uno sfondo non raggiungibile oltre le colonne d’Ercole podestarili.”¹⁷¹ Here, we start to understand the ways in which Gagliano is repressive for

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 68.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 4-5.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 35.

Levi; it is an island beyond which he is not permitted to venture. I think, however, that it is productive to think of the Pillars of Hercules in terms of a border. In other words, they mark a line that Levi, as a *confinato*, is forbidden to cross, as well as a barrier for those outside of Gagliano. Thus, the space of *confino* exists beyond the Pillars of Hercules (markers that have traditionally been understood in prohibitory and restrictive terms); it is the space that lies outside that which is considered inhabitable by the living, a “lontana spiaggia inospitale.”¹⁷² Giuseppe Lupo writes that “Levi si sente un Ulisse,” and here we may note that Levi is drawing inspiration from Canto XXVI of Dante’s *Inferno*, in which the pilgrim learns of Ulysses’ fateful voyage beyond the Pillars of Hercules.¹⁷³ In Dante’s entirely invented tale of Ulysses’ last voyage, Ulysses sails beyond the Pillars of Hercules, eventually spotting Mount Purgatory before a shipwreck causes his death.¹⁷⁴ Read in this way, the land *beyond* Gagliano is off limits for the *confinati*. Indeed, if for Christianity Purgatory is the land of those who have been “saved” (having died in God’s grace), in *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* the land beyond Gagliano represents the land of the saved not only because Christianity (civilization) reached it as the title of the novel suggests, but also because of the belief of its people in the regime’s ideologies. Indeed, it is no coincidence that briefly after Levi mentions the Pillars of Hercules the town’s priest proclaims that “È un paese senza grazia di Dio, questo.”¹⁷⁵ Levi, who was sent to *confino* because of his antifascist activity (the details of his antifascism and his subsequent arrest

¹⁷² Ibid., 37.

¹⁷³ Giuseppe Lupo, “Tra inferno contadino e paradiso americano: Carlo Levi, Dante e la Bibbia,” *Otto/Novecento* XXVIII, 1 (2004): 75.

¹⁷⁴ See Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, edited and translated by Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 26.55-142.

¹⁷⁵ Levi, 35.

are conspicuously absent from the novel), cannot reach salvation in Mussolini's Italy and thus lives as one of the politically damned.

For Levi, the restrictive nature of Gagliano shifts later in the novel, as the space itself is personified and can be compared to Levi's initial arrival in Gagliano. The language he utilizes to describe his initial, passive arrival in the town (a car brought him to Gagliano, he was furthermore accompanied by members of the State, etc.) mirrors the language he will use later in the novel upon reentering Gagliano a second time, yet the focus shifts away from the objects and the people who brought him there. Upon returning from a short visit to Grassano, for example, Levi writes, "Gagliano mi riprese e rinchiuse, come l'acqua verde di un pantano raccoglie la rana, indugiata sulla proda ad asciugarsi al sole. Mi pareva ancora più lontano e solitario di prima; nessun suono mi giungeva dal mondo di fuori: qui non passavano attori né mercanti."¹⁷⁶ In this passage, Gagliano itself is the agent of Levi's exile and suppression, rather than the individuals working for the State. In shifting the focus to the land itself, Levi underscores the oppressive qualities of the locations chosen as sites of *confino*. Gagliano is not only remote, cut off from civilization and the rest of Italy, but also suffocating in the hold it maintains on the *confinato*.

The descriptions of Gagliano that I have examined thus far paint *confino* in infernal terms;¹⁷⁷ it is useful, then, to consider the space of Gagliano as the "land of the

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 177.

¹⁷⁷ For an analysis of Gagliano as a hellscape or a type of underworld, see Maria Pia Ellero, cit., Giuseppe Lupo, cit., and Donato Sperduto, "Carlo Levi e la discesa agli inferi: sul 'proemio' del '*Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*,'" *Italianistica: Rivista di letteratura italiana* 40.1 (January/April 2011): 125-137.

dead,”¹⁷⁸ and I argue that we should consider this metaphor not only in terms of what it implies for Levi’s *contadini*, who live “nella presenza della morte,”¹⁷⁹ but also for Levi himself, who, as a *confinato*, we must count among the politically damned of fascist Italy. Levi refers to his experience in *confino* as “un anno di vita sotterranea.”¹⁸⁰ Indeed, as a *confinato politico*, Levi has been exiled from the political community of Italy and now occupies a space that exists outside of it. Spaces such as the cemetery, a space that the author visits often, figure prominently in Levi’s novel. The cemetery is important for our analysis of Levi’s novel in terms of *confino* because this space seems to have significance solely for the author and it is a space that he frequents alone: “era il solo luogo chiuso, fresco e solitario di tutto il paese.”¹⁸¹ It is interesting to note that the cemetery is a space that is avoided by the citizens of Gagliano and that only Levi—a *confinato*—occupies the space. Regarding the space of the cemetery and its location on the edge of the city, Foucault reminds us that “The dead, it is supposed, bring illnesses to the living, and it is the presence and proximity of the dead right beside the houses, next to the church, almost in the middle of the street, it is this proximity that propagates death itself.”¹⁸² Keeping in line with this logic, then, the cemetery in Levi’s novel functions both as a site of contamination and quarantine. If Levi’s antifascist politics represent the threat of contamination in Mussolini’s Italy, then he must occupy the spaces in which death has been externalized to avoid contact with the others. Indeed, in the moments throughout the

¹⁷⁸ Garofalo, Leake, and Renga suggest that we may also consider Gagliano as a site of perpetual mourning (107).

¹⁷⁹ Levi, 1.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 240.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 60.

¹⁸² Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 6.

novel in which Levi does interact with the population of Gagliano, it is never in a political capacity as this relates to fascism or antifascism. In the novel, then, we witness the tension between Levi as both political threat (let us recall from my first chapter that Mussolini referred to the *confinati* in terms of illness) and doctor for the peasants of Gagliano. It is moreover noteworthy that Levi, when visiting the cemetery, remarks about the presence of a ditch in its center, which contains “pareti ben tagliate nella terra secca pronta per il prossimo morto.”¹⁸³ Immediately after providing this detail, Levi informs the reader that he would often climb down into the ditch where he would read and fall asleep with his dog, Barone, thus becoming its “prossimo morto.” This action represents the performance of Levi’s own political death in fascist Italy, but also forces us to consider the function of the space of the cemetery itself in Levi’s novel.¹⁸⁴ According to Foucault, the cemetery is a “highly heterotopic place, since, for the individual, the cemetery begins with this strange heterochrony, the loss of life, and with this quasi-eternity in which her permanent lot is dissolution and disappearance.”¹⁸⁵ The space of the cemetery is significant for Levi in a different way in that he does not experience a loss of life in terms of *zoē*, animal life, but rather in terms of *bios*, political life. It is also significant for Levi through the way in which he enters and uses its space, which is divorced from the traditional practices associated with the cemetery. Concerning the space of the cemetery of a heterotopic site, Peter Johnson writes,

[I]t is also noteworthy that the cemetery links with other principles of heterotopia: a major example of a space that marks a ‘crossing’ or a rites of passage (Ragon, 1983:65-71) and an emplacement that paradoxically incorporates both extremes of a

¹⁸³ Levi, 60.

¹⁸⁴ Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, instead, see this as an action that “enacts the immobility of the town and of the region” (108).

¹⁸⁵ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 6.

‘heterochronia’, an utter break with time as well as an accumulation of time through its formation as a kind of ‘museum’ of the dead (89-104).¹⁸⁶

Indeed, Foucault’s fifth principle of heterotopias states that entry into the heterotopia is either compulsory, or “the individual has to submit to rites and purifications.”¹⁸⁷ Foucault does not expand on what this means for the cemetery, or for the grave itself, but we may think of the cleansing of the body in preparation for burial, the ceremony that precedes the burial, and the burial of the body itself. In entering the space of the grave, Levi does not submit to any of the traditional rites or purifications associated with burial, thus breaking with the fifth principle of the heterotopia. I read this as a reflection of the condition of the political prisoner in fascist Italy. If the cemetery is a museum, “a place-to-visit,” as Michel Ragon has suggested,¹⁸⁸ for Levi it takes on an entirely different significance. Whereas the sites of graves and tombstones represent monuments to the dead, Levi’s occupation of the empty grave in Gagliano’s cemetery signals the erasure of political belonging for the *confinato*. He lays in an empty grave, an unmarked site of political death, for in fascist Italy there can exist no trace of or monument to the struggles of those who share Levi’s politics. Thus, rather than functioning as an accumulation of time through its museum of the dead, as Peter Johnson suggests, the cemetery in Levi’s

¹⁸⁶ Peter Johnson, “The Changing Face of the Modern Cemetery: Loudon’s Design for Life and Death,” *Berfrois* 8 June 2012, www.berfrois.com/2012/06/foucault-and-the-cemetery.

¹⁸⁷ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 7.

¹⁸⁸ See Michel Ragon, *The Space of Death: A Study of Funerary Architecture, Decoration, And Urbanism*, translated by Alan Sheridan (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983) 89-106.

novel is a space that exists entirely outside of time, as his grave contains no temporal reference whatsoever.¹⁸⁹

If we are to accept that Levi utilizes the graveyard to extrapolate on the political death of the antifascist, then we must also examine the idea that the graveyard represents the death of time before the beginning of the fascist era in Italy, or a place that exists outside of time entirely. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the only other figure who occupies the space of the cemetery is a figure with “una strana voce senza sesso, né timbro, né età” and a face that Levi describes as “fuori del tempo.”¹⁹⁰ The beginning of the fascist era in Italy marks a break in time, especially considering the way in which time was kept differently following the *marcia su Roma*. Emilio Gentile notes that “Già nel 1923 Mussolini usava datare i testi da lui firmati aggiungendo, all’anno cristiano, l’indicazione «anno primo dell’era fascista».”¹⁹¹ In numbering the dates in a different manner, the regime was asserting itself as the arbiter of a new historical period separate from the one that had preceded it. If, as Foucault writes, “The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time,”¹⁹² then we may read the cemetery and Levi’s unmarked grave as representations of a space and time outside of Italy’s fascist era, indicating the death of the period that preceded the fascist *ventennio*.

¹⁸⁹ See also Garafalo, Leake, and Renga, who suggest that the cemetery is the “site of timeless immobility *par excellence*” (108).

¹⁹⁰ Levi, 60. Later in the novel, Levi, writes: “Mi pareva di essere staccato da ogni cosa, da ogni luogo, remotissimo da ogni determinazione, *perduto fuori del tempo*, in un infinito altrove” (213).

¹⁹¹ Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del littorio: la sacralizzazione della politica nell’Italia fascista* (Bari: Laterza, 1993), 100.

¹⁹² Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 6.

Aside from Levi's interactions with the space that he occupies, the way in which the *contadini* in the novel refer to the *confinati* and the State also helps us to understand his experience in Gagliano:

Quando, nei primi giorni, mi capitava d'incontrare sul sentiero, fuori del paese, qualche vecchio contadino che non mi conosceva ancora, egli si fermava sul suo asino, per salutarmi, e mi chiedeva: - Chi sei? *Addò vades?* (Chi sei? Dove vai?) - Passeggio, - rispondevo, - sono un confinato. - Un esiliato? (I contadini di qui non dicono confinato, ma esiliato). - Un esiliato? Peccato! Qualcuno a Roma ti ha voluto male -.¹⁹³

This is the first of two instances in which Levi is referred to as an *esiliato* rather than a *confinato*, the other being when Levi is at the barber and meets a brigand from Grassano.¹⁹⁴ In using the word "exile" rather than "political prisoner," the key to understanding Levi's experience lies in the fact of being sent away from a space rather than being detained in another. That is, the emphasis lies not on the experience of confinement and its restrictive properties, but rather on banishment from one's community. Indeed, the invocation of Rome in this passage represents the political community from which Levi was exiled, a space that is also "più lontano del cielo"¹⁹⁵ for the peasants of Gagliano, thus contributing to their apolitical nature. However, exile, in the case of *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, is not simply the banishment from his homeland and forced domicile in another, faraway land. For Levi, exile presupposes not only a loss of homeland, but an inability to connect with that same land upon returning:

Il mio soggiorno fu melanconico, a parte la ragione dolorosa del viaggio. Mi aspettavo il più vivo piacere nel rivedere la città, nel parlare con i vecchi amici, nel ripartecipare per un momento a una vita molteplice e movimentata: ma ora sentivo in me un distacco che non sapevo superare, un senso di infinita lontananza, una difficoltà di

¹⁹³ Levi., 70.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 133-134.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

adesione che mi impedivano di godere dei beni ritrovati.¹⁹⁶

If for Levi exile is alienating because he is confined to a remote area of the South with which he is not familiar, it becomes doubly so in that it strips him of his ability to identify with his homeland, so to speak.

Although we would do well to recall Edward Said's reflections on exile: "The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever,"¹⁹⁷ it is also important to understand that Levi's experience in Gagliano inspired artistic creativity through his painting and this very novel, which raised political consciousness regarding Italy's Southern Question. More importantly, Levi's experience in *confino* described in the novel differs from that of the protagonist of Pavese's, where Stefano cannot seem to fully connect with his environment or the others that surround him. Instead, in *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, Levi is able to connect with the peasantry of the South, who are portrayed as apolitical in the novel:

Nessuno dei contadini, per la ragione opposta, era iscritto, come del resto non sarebbero stati iscritti a nessun altro partito politico che potesse, per avventura, esistere. Non erano fascisti, come non sarebbero stati liberali o socialisti o che so io, perché queste faccende non li riguardavano, appartenevano a un altro mondo, e non avevano senso.¹⁹⁸

Although the matters of the state do not initially seem to concern the peasantry, an episode toward the end of the novel challenges this narrative. Given that Levi is the doctor whom the peasants of Gagliano consult for treatment, he is able to connect with them and gain their trust. So, when a telegram from the police in Matera arrives that

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 233.

¹⁹⁷ Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173.

¹⁹⁸ Levi, 69.

forbids Levi from practicing medicine in Gagliano, resulting in the death of an ill man, the peasants are ready to revolt:

Appena arrivato a Gagliano, mi accorsi, dal viso dei contadini, che qualcosa stava fermentando in paese [...] I contadini avevano dei visi che non avevo ancora mai visto loro: una torva decisione, una disperazione risoluta faceva più neri i loro occhi. Uscivano di casa armati, con i fucili da caccia, e le scuri.¹⁹⁹

In this moment, the state is no longer a far-away entity that has no effect on the peasantry of the South, but rather a bringer of death, exemplified in its power to make live and let die. Levi is eventually able to calm down the peasants, but they nevertheless find another way to express their righteous anger. The peasants put on a play in the middle of the street where they reenact the aforementioned incident and effectively place the blame for the death of the man on Rome (the state), thus satirizing the episode and granting a voice to their discontent.²⁰⁰

Levi's presence in the *confino* colony of Gagliano, then, contributes to the political consciousness of the peasantry. The theatrical production of the peasants subverts the power dynamics in the town of Gagliano, as the actors engage in a type of creative revolt, one that takes place on the popular "stage" of the streets. It is a heterotopia that closely resembles the heterotopia of the mirror, which can be described as such because "[t]he mirror does exist in reality, where it exists a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there."²⁰¹ The actors stage their production in various parts of the town, including in front of the houses of the other

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 215-216.

²⁰⁰ See *ibid.*, 217-220.

²⁰¹ Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 4.

doctors, the town hall, the barracks of the *carabinieri*, as if to hold a mirror up those in society who are responsible for the oppression of the peasantry. The stage, then, may be considered a crisis heterotopia. The artistic production of the peasants represents a crisis, insofar as marks a turning point in the political consciousness of the peasantry and, furthermore, disrupts the ordinary power dynamics in Gagliano. Like other crisis heterotopias, the turning point takes place in locations that may be considered “elsewhere,” the improvised stages throughout the town.²⁰² Thus, Levi—who had been sent to *confino* because of his antifascist politics and organizing—becomes a catalyst for political organizing in a previously apolitical subgroup of the Italian population, effectively defeating the aim of *confino* for Fascist politics.²⁰³

We have seen how the space of *confino* shares characteristics with Italy’s colonies (both internal and external), the camp, and the heterotopia. It is an immobile and restrictive space, though—as we see in Levi’s novel—it does not preclude the possibility of resistance. It is, instead, highly variable; what may in one moment be an ordinary space for the residents of the town in which a *confinato* resides is, in another, a carceral space for that very same *confinato*. The space of *confino*, then, is characterized by the way in which those who occupy and interact with that same space experience it. Through the transformation of the space of *confino*, it is possible, then, to undermine the politics of death of the fascist regime, which I will further explore in Chapter Four.

²⁰² See *ibid.*, 4-5.

²⁰³ For a discussion of the intersection between art, creativity, and politics in Carlo Levi, especially as it relates to the South and the peasantry, see David Ward, *Carlo Levi: Gli italiani e la paura della libertà* (Milan: La Nuova Italia, 2002), especially pages 59-64 and 129-137.

Chapter Three Gay Men and *Confinio*

3.1 Italy Must Be Defended: Surveillance and Biopolitics in *Una giornata particolare*

Until recently, films that deal with the fascist *confinio*, or internal exile implemented by the Italian fascist regime, as a theme have received little scholarly attention.²⁰⁴ While many have written about Ettore Scola's *Una giornata particolare* (*A Special Day*, 1977), specifically with regard to gender and sexuality,²⁰⁵ its relevance to *confinio* has been relegated to footnotes and anecdotes. This essay seeks to fill that gap, situating *confinio* at the center of its analysis. I argue for a biopolitical reading of *Una giornata particolare* in order to tease out the ways in which the surveillance apparatus of the fascist regime functioned to induce submissive behavior from Italian citizens during the *ventennio*, or the roughly twenty-year period of fascism in Italy. In the cases in which the regime deemed that citizens were noncompliant, and thus enemies of the state, they were often imprisoned or sent to internal exile in remote areas of Italy, mainly in the South. Drawing on the notion of panopticism, theorized by Michel Foucault through his analysis of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, I seek to demonstrate how a mode of

²⁰⁴ A recent essay that addresses this concern is Dana Renga, "Screening *confinio*: Male melodrama and exile cinema," in *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies* 5.1 (2017): 23-46. A version of her essay and other commentary on the representation of *confinio* appear in Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, cit.

²⁰⁵ See Millicent Marcus, "Un'ora e mezzo particolare: Teaching Fascism with Ettore Scola," in *Italica* 83.1 (Spring 2006): 53-61; Sandra Ponzanesi, "Queering European Sexualities Through Italy's Fascist Past: Colonialism, Homosexuality, and Masculinities," *What's Queer about Europe? Productive Encounters and Re-enchanting Paradigms*, eds. Mireille Rosello and Sudeep Dasgupta (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 81-90; Sergio Rigoletto, *Masculinity and Italian Cinema: Sexual Politics, Social Conflict, and Male Crisis in the 1970s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 93-100; Szymon Pietrzykowski, "Gay as a Stranger: Homosexuality during Fascism in Ettore Scola's 'Una Giornata Particolare' ['A Special Day']," in *Maska* 24 (2014): 75-88.

disciplinary power is inscribed in fascist architecture and further extended beyond physical structures to pervade everyday social life and relations, evolving into what Mark Andrejevic calls “lateral surveillance,” which would allow the regime to spy on Italians through citizen-to-citizen surveillance. The analysis of this essay centers on the Palazzo Federici—the setting of the entire film and an exemplary case of fascist architecture and the way in which Benito Mussolini sought to control the environment where his subjects lived—as well as the building’s caretaker (Françoise Berd), ultimately demonstrating how the regime managed to erase the distinction between public and private spaces, thus providing a mechanism through which it could practice surveillance and *chirurgia fascista*: a term Mussolini uses in his *Discorso dell’Ascensione* to justify the removal and exile of those who opposed him. I argue that Gabriele represents the figure of the *homo sacer*, a term borrowed from Giorgio Agamben, who is stripped of his juridical status and exiled from the political community. His political “death” through *confino* and subsequent transformation into a non-person will pave the way for the Fascist New Man—the virile, masculine symbol of Mussolini’s Italy—while ironically laying the groundwork for effective antifascist resistance.

Una giornata particolare is set in Rome on the day that Adolf Hitler visits Benito Mussolini (May 6, 1938) and revolves around the chance meeting between Antonietta (Sophia Loren) and Gabriele (Marcello Mastroianni), who both live in Palazzo Federici. Although a historical event is the frame for the story, the film takes place entirely within the walls of the large public housing complex designed by Mario De Renzi and constructed along Viale XXI Aprile in Rome’s Nomentano neighborhood. The complex itself may be considered the third protagonist of the film. Indeed, following the newsreel

footage that prefaces the film, a survey of the structure of the complex initiates the narrative. Scola's camera pans from right to left in a low angle shot, establishing the threatening essence of the building, as well as conveying a sense of claustrophobia. As Luciano De Giusti writes, "L'esiguità degli spazi in cui i personaggi si muovono sono accentuate dalle scelte di regia che riducono ogni possibilità di aperture."²⁰⁶ Indeed, the camera eye operates in completely enclosed spaces, often denying the audience a view of the sky, as De Giusti also notes. Thus, the Palazzo Federici is reduced to a prison-like structure,²⁰⁷ in which its inhabitants are suffocated by fascist ideology and iconography. The metaphor of housing complex as prison is a critical part of this essay, as I draw parallels between the building and Bentham's Panopticon.

Following the initial shot, the camera eye dwells on the caretaker of the building, who will be a central figure in carrying out surveillance throughout the film and who furthermore represents the omnipresence of the fascist government. The camera continues to examine the building's residents, who are individually framed in their own apartments. For this reason, we can also read their apartments as prison cells. The camera finally focuses on the housewife Antonietta who, taking care of six children and a husband who is a Fascist Party official, is living in her own sort of prison. The family prepares for the rally, dressing up in official fascist uniforms. They represent the prototypical fascist family, loyal to the party and its doctrine. Antonietta's husband, Emanuele, upholds fascist doctrine through his appearance and also through his actions.

²⁰⁶ Luciano De Giusti, "La lunga durata di *Una giornata particolare*," in *Trevico – Cinecittà: L'avventuroso viaggio di Ettore Scola*, edited by Vito Zagarrò (Venice: Marsilio, 2002), 278.

²⁰⁷ See also Christian Uva, "Un borgo nella metropoli: Ettore Scola a Palazzo Federici," *The Italianist* 35.2 (June 2015): 284-290.

He is the fascist virile man,²⁰⁸ the dominant head of the family who subjugates his wife and demonstrates his physical strength and athleticism through the exercises he performs shortly after waking up. Sergio Rigoletto notes that Emanuele's virility is a "distinctive public performance,"²⁰⁹ but we must also note that one of his sons follows in his footsteps, subjugating women through the voyeuristic pleasure he takes in viewing an erotic magazine and drawing on a mustache in order to perform his own masculinity. Emanuele furthermore adheres to fascist language policy, which sought to outlaw foreign words,²¹⁰ correcting another son when he uses a foreign word, pom-pom, asking him to Italianize the word, instead. It is also worth noting that some of the children of the family have names, such as Romana and Littorio, which exalt the ideals of imperial Rome. Thus, fascism has invaded every aspect of life in Italy, from daily routines to language use and naming traditions.

As the apartment complex empties and its residents head to the rally, we understand that the complex represents a microcosm of the Italian nation under fascism. Indeed, the spaces that make up the Palazzo Federici are clearly marked as fascist spaces. Aside from the flags of the Fascist and the Nazi Parties that drape from the railings of the raised walkways, above every entrance is the *fascio littorio*, the symbol of the National Fascist Party, designating the pervasiveness of the regime's ideology, even in private spaces. In inhabiting these spaces, the residents participate in and submit themselves to a culture of fascism, through which their identity as Italians in fascist Italy is formed. According to Elena Gorfinkel and John David Rhodes, "Identity is constructed in and

²⁰⁸ For a discussion on the virile man, see Spackman, cit.

²⁰⁹ Rigoletto, 95.

²¹⁰ See Gabriella Klein, *La politica linguistica del Fascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986).

through place, whether by our embrace of a place, our inhabitation of a particular point in space, or by our rejection of and departure from a given place and our movement toward, adoption and inhabitation of, another.”²¹¹ Gabriele is the only antifascist in the film, and because of his views he is forbidden from occupying certain spaces. He is fired from his job as a radio broadcaster, thus eliminating his vocal presence along the airwaves and replacing it with that of Guido Notari, an actor and radio personality, whose voice fills the diegetic space of the apartments of the Palazzo Federici for most of the film. Indeed, Gabriele’s presence in the Palazzo Federici—an inherently fascist space—is only ephemeral, as he awaits his deportation to *confino* in Sardinia.

Confino may be considered as a form of both social engineering and spatial engineering, as those exiled by the regime were interned in remote locations and islands, mainly in the South of Italy, thus allowing the regime to control the demographics, as well as identity, in the areas it deemed appropriate. We can relate this to immunitary protection. Speaking of immunitary protection, Roberto Esposito writes, “Evil must be thwarted, but not by keeping it at a distance from one’s borders; rather, it is included inside them. The dialectical figure that thus emerges is that of exclusionary inclusion or exclusion by inclusion. The body defeats a poison not by expelling it outside the organism, but by making it somehow part of the body.”²¹² Exclusion by inclusion, the fact of existing both internal to and external to Italy is what comes to define the *confinati*. This is necessary, however, in order to construct the fascist state desired by Mussolini.

²¹¹ Elena Gorfinkel and John David Rhodes, “Introduction,” in *Taking Place: Location and the Moving Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), ix.

²¹² Roberto Esposito, *Immunitas. The Protection and Negation of Life*, Translated by Zakiya Hanafi (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 8.

By removing the infecting agent, through the “death” of the antifascist, the regime is able to construct a pure space in which life—understood as the new fascist subject—might thrive. Despite this effort, *confino* colonies would effectively become “schools of antifascism,” as Alberto Jacometti writes,²¹³ and the intellectuals and antifascists who made up their population would lay the groundwork for a post-war Italy and Europe that had been ravaged by the ideology of fascism.²¹⁴

The regime relied heavily on surveillance in order to eliminate from its spaces antifascists and those whom fascist ideology deemed “subversive.” If we are to understand the Palazzo Federici as a microcosm of the nation, then the control over space and the determination of who may or may not occupy certain spaces (the control over bodies) functions to shape the new Italian. Architecture plays a crucial role in this practice, as it is an instrument that, according to Sven-Olov Wallenstein, “is an essential part of the biopolitical machine.”²¹⁵ In Wallenstein’s words, “Architecture is no longer *like* a body [...] but *acts upon* the body,”²¹⁶ and thus we may affirm that the architectural structure finds meaning only through the body that moves through or is eliminated from its space.²¹⁷ The relationship between architecture and the policing of the Italian body features prominently throughout the film; Scola provides various shots of the Palazzo Federici throughout the film, and his camera reveals that the building is constructed in a manner that obliterates privacy. The structure’s transparent windows and stairwells allow

²¹³ Jacometti, 31.

²¹⁴ See Poerio, cit.

²¹⁵ Sven-Olov Wallenstein, *Biopolitics and the Emergence of Modern Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural, 2009), 20.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 25.

²¹⁷ See note 33 in *Ibid.*, 46.

for effortless surveillance of the movements and actions of its inhabitants,²¹⁸ thus acting as a fascist Panopticon. While the Palazzo Federici is certainly not the Panopticon that Bentham imagines, the purpose of the building is similar to that which he theorized. Scola's camera adopts the perspective of the prison inspector, lingering on the various residents of the building in the opening shots of the film. Throughout the film, there are various shots that demonstrate the view that the building's residents have from inside their own apartments, such as Gabriele's view from his desk at the beginning of the film and Antonietta's view from her apartment's kitchen. These shots show that the Palazzo Federici is a completely enclosed structure, as the views from each window reveal a snapshot into the apartments of the other inhabitants, demonstrating the limited privacy that is easily undermined by wandering eyes, such as those of the building's caretaker. Thus, De Renzi's architecture allows for ordered and facilitated surveillance, erasing the distinction between public and private spaces. The residents of the Palazzo Federici, then, must always be aware of the possibility of being surveilled. Indeed, as the complex clears out, we observe the movement of its residents, who are visible through transparent glass panes as they utilize the stairwells. Then, when the complex is empty, Antonietta's bird, Rosmunda, repeats her name, thus reminding her that someone is always watching. It is this same bird that sets the plot of the film into motion, escaping from Antonietta's apartment and flying to Gabriele's. Before arriving at Gabriele's apartment, the bird flies around the complex as the camera cuts back and forth between shots of Antonietta at her window and shots of the bird's wide flight path, demonstrating the ease with which one

²¹⁸ See also Paul Baxa, "Ettore Scola's 'A Special Day,'" *AMU on Film* (The Ave Maria University Film Society: 8 Sept. 2011), <https://amufilm.wordpress.com/2011/09/08/ettore-scolas-a-special-day>.

may carry out surveillance throughout the complex. Later in the film, Gabriele will observe, at length, his own apartment from Antonietta's, remarking how strange it is to see it from someone else's viewpoint, allowing us to reflect on the possibility of past surveillance performed on Gabriele specifically.

We must furthermore consider the concept of "lateral surveillance," put forth by Mark Andrejevic. The most threatening embodiment of this type of surveillance power in the film is exemplified by the building's caretaker, who, in addition to Gabriele and Antonietta, also stays home from the rally. Luciano De Giusti notes that the caretaker is akin to a prison guard,²¹⁹ although we may argue that any resident in the Palazzo Federici may fulfill this role. Her presence is always felt throughout the film; she oversees the behavior of the residents of the complex, saluting them as they leave for the rally and greeting them as they come back, ensuring that they have fulfilled their duty as members of fascist Italy. Even when she is not physically present, we are reminded that she is near; the sound of the rally blaring from her radio is audible throughout most of the film. Although the caretaker is completely ignored by the other residents of the complex, and her interaction with Antonietta and Gabriele is limited, she represents the fear of Italians of the pervasive surveillance of the regime. This fear is evident throughout the film: when Gabriele first comes to Antonietta's apartment, he remarks that she does not seem happy to see him, to which she responds, "Quando bussano alla porta mi piglia sempre un po' di paura; se uno chiede chi è, quello risponde 'amici.'" Aware of the intelligence-gathering power of the "Organizzazione per la Vigilanza e la Repressione dell'Antifascismo" (OVRA)—the fascist secret police—Italians had to fear the omnipresence of the regime.

²¹⁹ De Giusti, 278.

Michael Ebner writes that “The myth of an omniscient and omnipotent OVRA [...] was perhaps not entirely overblown, if one considers the interconnectedness of OVRA with the offices of the *polizia politica* and the network of informants surrounding the *questure*.”²²⁰ Ebner moreover notes that the network of informants was recruited from a wide pool of Italians, including former Socialists and Communists, family members, and private businesses, with some individuals being offered employment;²²¹ thus ordinary citizens always had to worry about the threat of surveillance, as seemingly anyone could be an informant. Indeed, as Mussolini is said to have told Arturo Bocchini, the head of the OVRA until 1940,

Dobbiamo trasformare l’ispettorato speciale di polizia in un organismo misterioso, potente, onnipotente. Tutti gli italiani dovranno sentire in ogni momento della loro vita, di essere sotto controllo, tenuti a bada, sentiti, sorvegliati da un occhio che nessuno sarà in grado di individuare. Sarà come se un individuo fosse costantemente sotto il tiro di una bocca da fuoco, come se due braccia fossero pronte, in qualsiasi istante, a immobilizzarlo. Il nuovo organismo avrà poteri e possibilità illimitati; e dovrà estenderli a tutto il paese come un mostruoso drago, come una gigantesca piovra. Ecco, sí. Proprio come i tentacoli di una piovra.²²²

Mussolini’s description recalls the function of panopticism that Foucault would describe many years later, as I discussed in Chapter One, and emphasizes the wide reach of the regime’s surveillance apparatus, taking on the monstrous appearance of a giant octopus capable of reaching anyone at any given time.

Scola does not hesitate to demonstrate this threat, as the next time the bell rings, it is the building’s caretaker—the symbol of the citizen surveillance apparatus of the fascist regime—who is standing outside. Antonietta is visibly frightened each time the caretaker

²²⁰ Ebner, 56.

²²¹ Ibid., 56-57.

²²² Quoted in Ghini and Dal Pont, 40-41.

comes to her door, and each time the conversation centers around the idea that Gabriele is an antifascist. The caretaker also implies that someone is always watching when she says, “A frequentare certa gente, una si può trovare pure nei guai [...] l’inquilino del sesto piano è una mezza cartuccia, un disfattista, un antifascista.” Thus, to be seen with someone whom the fascist regime deemed subversive was cause for concern and precaution. Consequently, both Antonietta and Gabriele seek to avoid surveillance as they move throughout the complex, utilizing the rooftop and other locations, such as the complex’s boiler room, in order to remain hidden from the building’s caretaker and, by extension, the eyes of the regime.²²³

Gabriele is aware that he cannot escape the eyes of the regime, and throughout the day we are reminded that he is preparing to be sent to *confino*. As Antonietta retrieves her escaped bird from Gabriele’s apartment, Gabriele’s phone rings. Through the phone conversation, we understand that Gabriele is preparing to leave somewhere, and this is the first allusion to *confino* in the film. Later, we learn that Gabriele’s friend, who he states is “Un sovversivo come me,” is interned in Carbonia in Sardinia, and thus we are to expect that Gabriele faces the same fate because he is gay.²²⁴ Gabriele’s phone conversation specifically reveals the measures taken by the fascist police with regard to those who were considered “subversive” in the eyes of the regime, and demonstrates how the state of exception is slowly becoming permanent in fascist Italy. Gabriele states “Lo

²²³ See Baxa for more commentary on the role of space in the building.

²²⁴ At least 300 Italians were interned due to their sexual orientation, although this number is mostly likely higher. In addition, almost all of those sentenced to *confino* due to their sexual orientation were men. See Gianfranco Goretti and Tommaso Giartosio, *La città e l’isola: Omosessuali al confino nell’Italia fascista* (Roma: Donzelli Editore, 2006), vii-viii.

fanno sempre quando ci sono queste cerimonie [...] vedrai che tra un paio di giorni lo rilascano,” thus demonstrating how the regime implemented the state of exception by temporarily suspending the law and detaining Italians without trial, and revealing the extent to which fascism policed bodies and restricted movement and productivity, understood in political, intellectual, or sexual terms. As a gay man in fascist Italy, Gabriele faces rejection and political death; he is fired by the EIAR (the Italian National Radio) because he is not a member of the Fascist Party, and he is not deemed a member of the Fascist Party because it is “a party of men.” In addition, Gabriele notes that his voice did not meet EIAR requirements: “Solenne, marziale, e vibrante di romano orgoglio” As we learn that he is waiting to be sent to *confino*, we must understand that he faces complete expulsion from the Italian community.

It is useful to consider these fascist concepts of biopolitics and public hygiene as they relate to Gabriele, with the presence of these ideas throughout the film. In juxtaposing Gabriele—a gay man—with Antonietta (she is the mother of six children), Scola emphasizes the regime’s characterization of Gabriele as a sterile figure, one who will not reproduce the ideology of fascism nor participate in the biological reproduction of the new Italian, modeled off Mussolini himself. Indeed, Gabriele himself does not fit into the definition of the fascist New Man. As Gabriele flips through Antonietta’s picture album, we learn what a man and a woman are in the eyes of the regime. The first caption upon which the camera focuses reads, “Donne fasciste, voi dovete essere le custodi del focolare.” Antonietta performs the role ascribed to her by the regime well, whereas Gabriele does not: on a page in which we see photos of Mussolini with his family, as well as photos of Mussolini dressed in military garb, we read the quote “L’uomo non è uomo

se non è marito, padre, soldato.” Gabriele is not any of these things: in fact, we learn in a conversation between Antonietta and him that, because he is single, he must pay a bachelor tax. In considering the significance of his existence for the public hygiene of the country, we are furthermore reminded of fascism’s other public health projects. In a scene inside Antonietta’s apartment, Gabriele moves about the room, observing the various objects hanging on the wall. The camera lingers over a framed certificate, which reads “Federazione italiana nazionale fascista per la lotta contro la tubercolosi,” before falling back on Gabriele. This juxtaposition forces us to consider Gabriele in medical terms, as a disease that may be controlled and eliminated by fascism.

Fascism’s control over Gabriele’s body is demonstrated as he dances the rumba in his apartment. As he starts dancing, the caretaker of the building turns on the radio broadcast of the rally, which drowns out Gabriele’s music. The song playing on the radio is “Giovinezza,” which was the official hymn of the Italian National Fascist Party. The song not only suggests the omnipresence of fascism in the lives of all Italians (the radio broadcast is heard in every part of the complex), but it also demonstrates the control that the regime has over the bodies of Italians. Gabriele turns off his own music, and as the fascist hymn plays, he notes that “Questo è meno ballabile.” The radio broadcast will continue to play nonstop throughout the film, up until the point in which Gabriele and Antonietta engage in sex. The film demonstrates not only the regime’s control over the bodies of potential subversives, but also over the bodies of the loyal practitioners of its ideology. After Gabriele finishes looking through the album, Antonietta describes the time she crossed paths with Mussolini. Antonietta depicts him in terms of the virile fascist man, recounting a story in which Mussolini gallops by her on horseback, which

causes her to become dizzy and subsequently faint. She learns that day that she is pregnant with her son, Littorio. It is as if Antonietta becomes pregnant through the will of Mussolini and his regime. As Duggan notes, Mussolini himself was an example of the fecund Italian, with five children,²²⁵ and, as noted previously, the New Man upon which Italians were to model themselves. Through the mythology surrounding Mussolini, then, Scola demonstrates the power that the regime held over fertility and the rate of reproduction of the Italian population.

However, the regime's control over the bodies of the Italian population is challenged in the climax of the film when Antonietta and Gabriele engage in sex. Up until this point, the patriotic music and the broadcast from the rally—the incessant presence of fascist rhetoric and ideology—is audible as it plays from the apartment of the caretaker. Only after Antonietta and Gabriele have sex does the radio go silent, perhaps indicating that Antonietta—by virtue of her chance meeting and bonding with Gabriele—is capable of seeing past and challenging the rhetoric of the regime. Antonietta's position on top of Gabriele—who remains relatively passive throughout the encounter—demonstrates her power and control and asserts her dominance in the sexual encounter, thus reversing traditional gender dynamics in fascist Italy. Sergio Rigoletto suggests that this encounter indicates “the recovery of a part of that sexual agency that she had to give up to fulfil her role of fascist mother and wife [...] the rediscovery of her body and of the terms of her oppression.”²²⁶ Scola, however, is quick to remind us that this type of reversal is not permitted by the regime. As the film concludes, both Gabriele and

²²⁵ Duggan, 471.

²²⁶ Rigoletto, 99.

Antonietta are forced to accept the position ascribed to them in fascist Italy. Antonietta watches from her apartment as Gabriele is being taken from his own, in order to be sent to *confino*. Gabriele, a future *confinato*, is the *homo sacer* of the fascist regime, reduced to bare life and stripped of his political existence. His detainment in the camp, “the materialization of the state of exception” of the twentieth century,²²⁷ his inclusion through exclusion, allows the virile fascist to thrive. Despite her sexual reawakening with Gabriele, Antonietta returns to her role as the submissive housewife and child bearer. Her husband, Emanuele, alludes to sex, and remarks that they will call their seventh child Adolf. At first, the film’s concluding shot, overlapped by the anthem of the Nazi Party, the “Horst Wessel Lied,” seemingly offers little hope. The camera eye rests on Antonietta, who walks into the bedroom and undresses, reinscribing her role assigned to her by the regime and reasserting its control over her body. But the seed has been planted—moments earlier, we see Antonietta tucking away the book gifted to her by Gabriele, suggesting that she will continue her resistance and learn to oppose the tyranny of fascist ideology.

Although *Una giornata particolare* demonstrates the power of fascist surveillance and biopolitics, it most importantly shows that it is possible to resist the influence and control of totalitarian politics. The film reveals that even though power may flow one way, this does not eliminate the possibility of engaging in acts of resistance that may someday bear fruit. Indeed, many of those sent to *confino* would eventually become the main actors in the literary and political community following World War II, laying the groundwork for the reconstruction of Italy and the (re)birth of the European community.

²²⁷ Agamben, 174.

The timing of the film and its message arrive during a significant moment in history; it was released in the heat of the international struggle for gay rights: a time in which many were fighting for freedom and control over their own bodies.²²⁸ Perhaps Scola's intention was to highlight that, even in the face of oppression, resistance *is* possible. After all, one encounter, one event, or one special day is enough to spark the change needed to achieve liberation.

3.2 Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Luca de Santis and Sara Colaone's *In Italia sono tutti maschi*

If *Una giornata particolare* demonstrates the intricacies of the surveillance apparatus of the fascist regime and its social engineering project, *In Italia sono tutti maschi* reveals more closely the relationship between politics and race, as well as the meaning of race for the regime. The book is a graphic novel about a character named Antonio Angelicola, known also as "Ninella" and his experience in *confino* on the island of San Domino delle Tremiti. The narrative alternates between the year 1987, in which Antonio is being interviewed by Nico and Rocco—a director and cameraman, respectively—for a documentary about the gay men who were sent to *confino*, and the past (1938-1939), during Antonio's time spent on the island where he was confined. As suggested in the title, Mussolini's Italians were to be considered a virile and fecund race. *In Italia sono tutti maschi* both challenges this assertion and highlights the measures that were taken to ensure that this was the prevailing impression throughout Italy. In the

²²⁸ The film was released less than ten years after the Stonewall riots of 1969, which kicked off the international gay rights movement. Subsequently, the 1970s proved to be an important period for the gay rights movement in Italy, as well. FUORI! (Fronte Unitario Omosessuale Rivoluzionario Italiano), the first Italian gay rights association, was born in 1971 in Turin. For more on this and the gay rights movement in Italy, see Gianni Rossi Barilli, *Il movimento gay in Italia* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1999).

section that follows, I argue that *In Italia sono tutti maschi* reveals the ways in which the policing and the repression of the individual body functioned to shape Italy's social body in an attempt to create a virile population and race.

The graphic novel works both to confirm the claim made in its title and disavow it throughout the narrative. One instance of this conflict is evident in the name(s) of the protagonist. The protagonist introduces himself as Antonio, but when he arrives on the island he tells the other *confinati* to call him Ninella, thus problematizing the question of gender from the outset of the graphic novel. Indeed, in discussing the graphic novel itself, the reader must also make the choice between calling the protagonist Antonio or Ninella. Ninella will subsequently utilize the feminine desinence with adjectives when others on the island, such as Sabino (who also uses the feminine desinence), address him in this manner (in response to Sabino's affirmation that Ninella is "fortunata," Ninella responds "Essì, sono proprio fortunata"),²²⁹ although if he is not responding to others he will utilize the masculine desinence. In the 1987 narrative Ninella goes by Antonio and utilizes the masculine desinence. The question of gender is furthermore explored during the first dinner on the island, where we meet Cincillà, a cross-dresser who sings for the *confinati*. The protagonist also informs us that:

Quando rifecero il nostro codice penale, il "Codice Rocco" ci misero pure un articolo contro quelli come noi, i femminielli [...] Allora Mussolini disse: "Noi non abbiamo bisogno di questa legge. In Italia sono tutti maschi!" [...] Alla fine toccava alle prefetture decidere di mandarci al confino, ma come "politici".²³⁰

²²⁹ Luca de Santis and Sara Colaone, *In Italia sono tutti maschi* (Bologna: Kappa Edizioni, 2010), 54. Emphasis mine.

²³⁰ Ibid., 35. In an interview with Giuseppe B. (Peppinella)—a gay man who was sent to *confino*—that appears at the end of the novel, the interviewee notes that the gay men sent to *confino* were unable to receive the state pension designated for the *confinati politici*, despite being categorized as political prisoners themselves (172-173). Garofalo, Leake,

The question of why the regime categorized gay *confinati* as *confinati politici* from 1936 to 1939 is complicated, as some scholars, such as Giovanni Dall’Orto, have sought to connect the persecution of gay men with the regime’s racial policies,²³¹ while others, such as Lorenzo Benadusi, have noted that the repression of gay men in Italy existed long before the introduction of the racial laws.²³² I tend to agree with Benadusi’s assertion that

The aversion toward homosexuals, however, certainly did not arise then but has its origins in the implicit racism of the model of a new man, something that is present in Fascism from the beginning. The first homosexuals put into *confinamento* in the 1920s were also considered a threat to the race: in their police files they were always described as “dangerous for the integrity and the health of the race,” which later became simply “dangerous for the integrity of the race.”²³³

We can say, then, that sexuality always held political importance for the regime, and thus I am not necessarily interested in the classification of the *confinati* as political or common, as it is clear that internal exile itself is a political measure, regardless of the administrative title assigned to the individual *confinato*. However, whether or not gender and sexuality can be connected to race is an entirely separate issue, and one that I shall explore in the section that follows.

The question of race and its importance in considering gay men and *confinamento* is evident from the outset of the graphic novel. The narrative that takes place in the past is set in 1938, the same year in which the *Manifesto della razza* was released and Italy’s racial laws went into effect. While Italy’s racial laws did not contain any specific

and Renga note that to do so “would deny the Regime’s stance regarding the heterocentricity of the populace” (189).

²³¹ See Giovanni Dall’Orto, “Omossessualità e razzismo fascista,” *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell’antisemitismo fascista*, edited by David Bidussa (Bologna: Grafis, 1994), 139.

²³² See Benadusi, *The Enemy of the New Man*, 131.

²³³ Ibid.

regulations against gay men (it is said that Mussolini claimed there was no need, since “In Italia sono tutti maschi”), it was certainly considered a threat to the race. For example, Ottavio Dinale—the prefect for Potenza—affirmed that gay men should not be allowed to reside on the mainland and, instead, should be imprisoned or detained in a penal colony because to do otherwise would be “a contradiction in terms for a regime that has established a miracle of institutions and initiatives for the physical and spiritual health of the race.”²³⁴ We witness, then, the importance of the control over space in developing the Italian race. If Italy is a virile nation, it follows that its spaces may only be occupied by virile Italians. De Santis and Colaone waste no time in demonstrating this concept in their graphic novel; in some of the first panels of the past narrative of *In Italia sono tutti maschi* we see the blurring of both private and public spaces and the policing of these spaces through the portrait of Mussolini—the epitome of Italian virility—that hangs on the wall in the Angelicola tailor shop. The portrait we see is situated just above Antonio’s left shoulder and depicts Mussolini, whose angry expression and narrowed eyes are fixed on Antonio. The portrait reveals not only fascism and Mussolini’s omnipresence and intrusion into every corner of Italian life, but also a comment on which individuals may or may not occupy certain spaces. Mussolini’s gaze first and foremost serves as a reminder of the surveillance power of the regime and its agents. Furthermore, as Antonio is the opposite of Italy’s virile man, the portrait functions as a warning to him and foreshadows his inevitable expulsion from his hometown of Salerno to the island of San Domino.

²³⁴ Quoted in Benadusi, *The Enemy of the New Man*, 130.

Antonio is not oblivious to the spatial restrictions of the regime, and we learn that he frequents ballrooms and meets up with other men in the woods. In meeting up with others in secrecy, Antonio hopes to evade the widespread surveillance apparatus of the regime; but under fascism no space is safe. Antonio is eventually caught in the woods and beaten by the OVRA, then subsequently taken to a police station where he and others are accused of being “Dediti alla pederastia passiva, con grave pregiudizio per la moralità pubblica e l’integrità della stirpe.”²³⁵ This statement is noteworthy, in that it reveals much about the regime’s preoccupation with race; gay men are not a threat to the race like those who are not considered to possess Italian blood, but instead, as Lorenzo Benadusi writes, “they damaged the prestige and integrity of the race because they jeopardized the institution of the family and contributed to spreading a perversion that was harmful for the nation.”²³⁶ Gay men, then, threatened the spirit and the strength of the fascist nation both because they ran counter to the idea of the virile man and because they would be detrimental to Mussolini’s scope of achieving high birth rates, thus affecting the proliferation of the Italian race. As Maria Sophia Quine argues, “Italian fascism sought to increase, by each and every socio-biological and repro-technological means, racial prolificity, rather than safeguard racial purity.”²³⁷ Thus, we cannot separate discourses of sexuality from discourses of race, even if they are not rooted in the concept of blood. Indeed, as Jemima Repo writes on the relationship between sexuality and race,

Sexuality is the point of access to both the population and the bodies that constitute it, but without race there would be no defined or delineated ‘living’ species population to target its disciplinary and regulatory controls. The result of this convergence was the

²³⁵ De Santis and Colaone, 28.

²³⁶ Benadusi, *The Enemy of the New Man*, 133.

²³⁷ Maria Sophia Quine, “Racial ‘Sterility’ and ‘Hyperfecundity’ in Fascist Italy. Biological Politics of Sex and Reproduction,” *Fascism* 1 (2012): 97.

development of the eugenic ordering of society that bridged race and sexuality as two mutually supporting apparatuses of modern biopower.²³⁸

Thus, the two are inseparable, as the control over bodies implicates the desire to regulate and improve the race; “there is no ‘species’ to speak of or defend without discourses of race, and the species cannot survive or flourish without its reproduction.”²³⁹ Discourses of race in the graphic novel revolve not around the biological makeup of the body (comments involving Italian blood are entirely absent), but rather the way in which that body is used in order to grow the Italian body as a collective. In the case of Antonio, his role as a “passive pederast” stands in opposition to the reproductive drive throughout the *ventennio*.²⁴⁰

In Italia sono tutti maschi emphasizes the role of the body in fascist politics and parrots the medical metaphors invoked by Mussolini and the fascist regime, which I spoke about in the first chapter. These metaphors pertain to the health of the nation, both in biological and in moral terms. Following Antonio’s arrest, an anatomical design of Antonio appears in the graphic novel, accompanied by comments that demonstrate the regime’s obsession with both the individual and collective Italian body. There are three separate comments, and it is worth it to quote them in their entirety:

Non sono presenti segni di sifilide e sifiloma all’ano. Ma dalla conformazione di quest’ultimo posso asserire che Angelicola Antonio è dedito alla pederastia passiva.

Ritengo pertanto indispensabile nell’interesse del buon costume e della sanità della razza, intervenire con provvedimenti più energici, perché il dilagare della piaga della pederastia venga aggredito e cauterizzato nei suoi focolai.

²³⁸ Jemima Repo, “The Life Function: The Biopolitics of Sexuality and Race Revisited,” in *Biopolitical Governance: Race, Gender and Economy*, edited by Hannah Richter (London: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd, 2018), 44-45.

²³⁹ Ibid., 45.

²⁴⁰ Benadusi notes that that term “pederast” was commonly used in fascist Italy to refer to effeminate gay men (*The Enemy of the New Man*, 303n16).

A ciò soccorra, nel silenzio della legge, il provvedimento di confino di polizia presso l'isola di San Domino Tremiti, sotto la prefettura del comune di Foggia, da adottarsi nei confronti dei più ostinati, fra cui segnalo l'individuo Antonio Angelicola.²⁴¹

The first thing I would like to point out here is that the comments in the above passage refer to the Italian race in terms of “sanità della razza,” whereas a couple pages prior to this race is mentioned in terms of “integrità della stirpe.” What are we to make of the shift from *stirpe* to *razza*? It could be the case that the author is simply exercising linguistic creativity. However, if we consider these two terms as they relate to race in the Italy of 1938, the distinction becomes clear. The authors of the *Manifesto della razza* of 1938 claim that “Il concetto di razza è concetto puramente biologico.”²⁴² *Razza*, in this context, is a concept that is strictly connected to the body, whereas *stirpe*—at least prior to 1938—refers to a more historical conception of race, divorced from any biological connotations.²⁴³ David Horn notes that, after the introduction of racial legislation in 1938, the press was even forbidden to use the word *stirpe*,²⁴⁴ and Mussolini moreover told his biographer that “[s]*tirpe* is a generic, literary expression, whereas *razza* interprets better my thinking, which refers to the blood and the flesh of the individual, in addition to the spirit.”²⁴⁵ So, in the case of the use of *stirpe* in the graphic novel, the focus is more so on gay men’s perceived damage to the prestige and morality of the Italian race. Indeed,

²⁴¹ De Santis and Colaone, 30.

²⁴² The manifesto was originally published as Lino Businco et al, “Manifesto degli scienziati razzisti,” *La difesa della razza* anno 1, numero 1, 5 Aug. 1938, 2. It is available on the website for the *Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia*: <https://www.anpi.it/storia/114/il-manifesto-della-razza-1938>

²⁴³ See Horn, 59. See also Aristotle Kallis, *Fascist Ideology: Territory and Expansionism in Italy and Germany, 1922-1945* (London: Routledge, 2000), 51.

²⁴⁴ See Horn, 139n27.

²⁴⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*, 139n28.

according to the fascist official in the spot where Antonio is being held, Antonio and the others who have been arrested “costituiscono pertanto un serio e pericoloso nocumento per la società, per i frequenti scandali cui danno luogo.”²⁴⁶ Thus, Antonio’s actions have threatened the Italian *stirpe* because they have challenged societal norms and have threatened public morality. On the other hand, in examining the sketch of Antonio that appears alongside the comments on the “sanità della razza,” we may note that the focus is clearly on the body as flesh rather than the social body and its accompanying morals. Antonio, stripped naked, stands alone on the page and is surrounded by the three above-mentioned comments. He is outlined in yellow, which stands in stark contrast to the all-black background on the page, thus drawing the reader’s eye to his naked figure. It is this privileging of the visual—almost claustrophobic in its execution—that calls attention to the importance of the body for the question of race and for *confino*.²⁴⁷ In describing this particular page as claustrophobic, I mean to underline the rigidity of its use of space in comparison to the majority of the pages and spaces that feature in this graphic novel. In *Redrawing the History Past: History, Memory, and Multiethnic Graphic Novels*, Martha J. Cutter and Cathy J. Schlund-Vials claim that the graphic narrative page is a “flexible space [...] in which readers can move not only forward but also backward, upward,

²⁴⁶ De Santis and Colaone, 28.

²⁴⁷ We would be mistaken not to mention the importance of Art Spiegelman’s seminal work *Maus*, serialized between 1980 and 1991, as a model for graphic novels depicting the totalitarian fascist regimes that formed in early twentieth-century Europe. As Jennifer Glaser suggests, the visual is an important component in “how we imagine and interpret race.” See Jennifer Glaser, “Art Spiegelman and the Caricature Archive,” *Redrawing the Historical Past: History, Memory, and Multiethnic Graphic Novels*, edited by Martha J. Cutter and Cathy J. Schlund-Vials (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2018), 294.

downward, and in several other directions.”²⁴⁸ This is mostly the case throughout the graphic novel; the pages are filled with multiple panels that allow the reader to engage with the text in the way that Cutter and Schlund-Vials describe. However, the page containing the anatomical sketch of Antonio denies the reader that freedom, as there are no other panels to see. The reader may only move back-and-forth between the medical rhetoric of the text appearing on the page and the anatomical sketch of Antonio, thus constraining the reader to step into the shoes of the medical examiner. In doing so, the reader engages in the practice of examining the body alongside the words that describe it and must consider what it means to be a man in fascist Italy.

The language used to describe Antonio and his actions sheds light on the way in which gay men constituted a dual threat to fascist Italy; in the eyes of the regime, gay men targeted both the moral and biological health of Italy. The body is policed, inspected, and quarantined once found to not conform to the standards of the fascist race. What is particularly interesting about the above comments and the anatomical sketch of Antonio is the way in which they reduce the existence of the individual to the physical body and, more importantly, the way in which that body is utilized. It is in this way, coupled with internal exile, that the regime politicizes the biological, while simultaneously expelling the *confinato* from the political community. Here, we are dealing with a form of power that possesses neither a disciplinary nor a rehabilitative function. Indeed, it is quite contradictory to send a group of gay men to live on the same island together if the goal is to discourage sexual practices that were considered abnormal

²⁴⁸ Martha J. Cutter and Cathy J. Schlund-Vials, “Introduction,” *Redrawing the Historical Past*, 2.

in the eyes of the regime. It is, then, a repressive measure through which the goal is to shape space by dictating who may occupy that very space. In fascist Italy, there is no way to separate the policing and shaping of space from the idea of race. Although the *Manifesto della razza* of 1938 states that race is a purely biological concept, we cannot discount the role space and mobility play in influencing biological life, and it is one that figures prominently in the *Manifesto* itself. The authors of the *Manifesto* wrote that “È una leggenda l’apporto di masse ingenti di uomini in tempi storici. Dopo l’invasione dei Longobardi non ci sono stati in Italia altri notevoli movimenti capaci di influenzare la fisionomia razziale della nazione.”²⁴⁹ In participating in historical revisionism and denying the migratory patterns that shaped Italy and Italians, the authors of the *Manifesto* are constructing a false narrative that allows them to claim a “pure” bloodline, developing from a solitary point of racial singularity without external influences. A similar type of work is at play in the practice of *confino*: by confining those deemed to be undesirable in the eyes of the regime to locations that were cut off from the rest of Italy, the regime would be able to shape Italy’s spaces, thus allowing them to claim a certain “type” of Italian while simultaneously disavowing those who did not fit into fascism’s nation-building project by consigning them to the margins of society. We would do well to also note that the island to which Antonio is exiled—San Domino Tremiti—exclusively housed gay *confinati*, thus serving as a sort of quarantine zone that reflects the rhetorical fear of contamination present in Mussolini’s speeches. Yet, the space of *confino* in the case of those confined on the island of San Domino Tremiti stands in opposition to inescapable space of death epitomized in the Agambenian camp. When asked if any

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

amorous relationships developed between *confinati*, Giuseppe B. states “E come noi! Là ci sono state perfino le coltellate fra siciliani, per passione!”²⁵⁰ Thus, in contrast to being a space of absolute immobility and unproductivity, it becomes, in this case, a space of productivity understood in sexual terms.

The history of *confino* is one in which bodies were sequestered and cast aside, and *In Italia sono tutti maschi* works to tell the stories of those who were rejected by the regime. It is, at the same time, a work that underlines the difficulty in recounting the experiences of the gay men who were persecuted under fascism, even if some may have mixed feelings about their time spent in *confino*. The irony of sending a group of gay men to live together on an island as punishment for their sexuality is underlined in the interview with Giuseppe B. that appears at the end of the graphic novel, when Giuseppe states “In fondo...si stava meglio là che qua [...] Ci furono femmenelle che piangevano quando venimmo via dalle Tremiti!”²⁵¹ This sentiment makes sense if we consider that the *confinati* were allowed to express their sexuality freely without fear of further

²⁵⁰ Quoted in De Santis and Colaone, 171.

²⁵¹ Quoted in *ibid.* The idea of *confino* as holiday has been repeated numerous times throughout history. Patrizia Gabrielli notes, “L’equazione tra il confino e la villeggiatura fu coniata da Arturo Bocchini; poi nel 1951 ripresa da Guido Leto, già Capo dell’Ovra; nel 2003 rilanciata da Silvio Berlusconi, il quale dichiarava l’indulgenza del duce verso gli oppositori ai quali, più che una punizione offriva una vacanza.” In *Tempio di virilità: L’antifascismo, il genere, la storia* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2008), 89-90. See also Renga, *cit.*, and Corvisieri, *cit.*, especially 7-31. Poerio notes that Emilio Lussu, Francesco Fausto Nitti, and Carlo Rosselli’s escape from the island of Lipari in 1929, “oltre a rappresentare una clamorosa sconfitta del regime, contribuisce a una pericolosa fuga di notizie che rischia di mettere in crisi l’immagine stereotipata del confino come pena minore, provvedimento preventivo e in ultimo di ‘villeggiatura’, benevolmente offerta agli oppositori del regime” (114). Francesco Fausto Nitti would subsequently narrate the escape from Lipari in *Escape: The Personal Narrative of a Political Prisoner Who Was Rescued from Lipari, the Fascist “Devil’s Island”* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1930).

persecution.²⁵² At the same time, the dual temporal nature of the novel allows the reader to witness the ambiguous feelings of the *confinati* toward their time spent in *confinio*. As Antonio remarks when speaking with Rocco, “Guarda che era una vergogna avere un figlio così! E tu vuoi rinviare tutto questo?”²⁵³ In this panel, both Antonio and Rocco are naked, but Rocco covers himself up; in the novel it is implied that Rocco is gay, and here, when considered alongside Antonio’s words, we can read this action as a sign of Rocco’s own reluctance to tell his story. As I have noted, part of the narrative takes place in 1987, which is situated squarely in the middle of the AIDS crisis, when gay men especially faced intense discrimination. In connecting these two moments of historical persecution of gay men, *In Italia sono tutti maschi* represents the perceived threat of gay men to the Italian race, whether in moral or biological terms. Most importantly, it is a novel that reminds us of the many untold stories of the individuals who were/are reluctant to speak out about their sexuality or were simply stripped of their voices.

²⁵² See also Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, 176.

²⁵³ De Santis and Colaone, 83. See also Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, 188-190.

Chapter Four Organizing in *Confinio*

Chapter 4.1 Constructing Resistance: Language, Body, and Space

In the past chapters, I have examined the ways in which Mussolini and the fascist regime utilized exile as a tool to halt the productivity of their political opponents. I now turn to the question of resistance within spaces of *confinio*. As Ghini and Dal Pont affirm, “La politica era il pane quotidiano dei confinati,”²⁵⁴ thus underlining the importance of continuing political education and activity while in exile. In this section, I argue that spaces of *confinio* become effective sites of resistance in creative, political, and intellectual terms, and thus pose the following questions: in what ways, and to what degree, were the *confinati* able to engage in resistance? How do we define resistance? How is a space of resistance constructed, and what does this space look like? I examine the memoirs and representations of *confinio* from former *confinati politici* and trace the ways in which they subvert the politics of death of fascism in order to engage in resistance, which I contend is tied to language, the body, and space. No one category is more important than any other, and it is only by investigating these categories in relation to each other that we can map resistance in *confinio*. For example, we know that, under fascism, not all language is considered legitimate, and it is language that gives substance to the thoughts of the mind. Language, in turn, is inseparable from the body and space: a particular type of language and mode of thinking is required in order to enter into certain spaces, and an individual may be removed from these spaces if he/she does not respect the norms of language required for that space. It is, then, through a reclamation of

²⁵⁴ Ghini and Dal Pont, 93.

language, the body, and space that the *confinati* are able to engage in resistance and practice a productive antifascist politics.

This dissertation examines, among other things, power and those who wield it, as well as how power may be seized. With regard to this, language certainly plays an important role, for he who possesses control of language consequently possesses and is able to exercise power. The control of language, however, cannot be possessed by all. In his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, given on December 2, 1970, Michel Foucault takes up the matter of discourse and its connection to power. Foucault reminds us that “in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality.”²⁵⁵ In fascist Italy, language is controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed through the propaganda machine of the regime. Language comes to function in a myriad of contexts, through which one expresses virility and national identity,²⁵⁶ among other things. The “Voi” replaced the “Lei,” while all foreign words were banned from the Italian language in favor of Italian neologisms. Yet language finds its most convincing employment through its role in the wielding of power; it is so important because “We know quite well that we do not have the right to say everything, that we cannot speak of just anything in any circumstances whatever, and that not

²⁵⁵ Michel Foucault, “The Order of Discourse,” Translated by Ian McLeod, *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, edited by Robert Young (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 52.

²⁵⁶ On the role of language in constructing national identity in fascist Italy, see Ruth Ben-Ghiat, “Language and the Construction of National Identity in Fascist Italy,” *The European Legacy* 2.3 (1997), 438-443. On the relationship between fascist rhetoric and virility, see Spackman, cit.

everyone has the right to speak of anything whatever.”²⁵⁷ Under fascism, the only individuals who have the right to speak about everything under all circumstances are the fascists themselves, with Mussolini as the supreme arbiter of the regime’s ideology and that which may be vocalized. Let us recall that to be considered subversive in the eyes of the regime, one only had to be denounced by the “*pubblica voce*” and, as Emilio Lussu affirms, “Siccome il pubblico in Italia non ha nessun diritto, neppure quella della parola, è facile capire che il pubblico di cui parla la legge, è quello fascista.”²⁵⁸ Thus, in the context of *confino politico*, those who possessed political ideologies that differed from that of the regime were excluded from the realm of what was considered legitimate speech, for what is ideology if not the symbols, narratives, and vocalization of a system of ideas?

I am interested in the ways in which the *confinati* were able to subvert the methods of fascist repression in order to engage in resistance. The first case I address deals with language on a symbolic level, specifically through the use of non-verbal language. Corvisieri recounts that on the island of San Nicola—one of the Tremiti islands—a group of *confinati* refused to give the fascist salute (as was ordered by the director of the colony) during roll call, with one (communist Giuseppe Andrini) exclaiming “Me ne fotto di voi e del saluto romano.”²⁵⁹ He was subsequently beaten and dragged to the police barracks, after which a group of *confinati* rebelled and descended upon the police, who were forced to retreat. If we consider that language is one of the tools through which fascism harnesses its power, then the refusal of the *confinati* to give

²⁵⁷ Foucault, “The Order of Discourse,” 52.

²⁵⁸ Emilio Lussu, *La catena* (Milan: Baldini & Castoldi, 1997), 42.

²⁵⁹ Quoted in Corvisieri, cit., 167.

the fascist salute is also a repudiation of the legitimacy of fascist language, which strips it of that very power. As Spinelli writes,

Poichè i gesti contano sempre molto, specialmente per i regimi totalitari che sono tutti terribilmente retorici, il problema del saluto fascista assunse al confino un significato del tutto sproporzionato. Il confino era il solo luogo d'Italia in cui questo saluto ostentatamente non si faceva per nessuna ragione, dinnanzi a nessuna autorità.²⁶⁰

Thus, even if the *confinati* were prohibited from speaking about politics, through this symbolic gesture they were able to communicate their political ideology just as easily.

The refusal to salute furthermore undermined the authority of the police on the island and helped to build solidarity among the *confinati*.

If we consider that those in *confino* were sent there because of their political beliefs (here I am speaking, of course, of the *confinati politici*), we must also consider the ways in which these beliefs were policed within the colonies themselves. We must not forget that surveillance continued in the colonies and even increased for certain individuals. Indeed, as Jacometti notes,

La paura fa fare molte cose. Fa fare anche questo: fa assegnare, a una dozzina di costoro, dicevamo, una guardia del corpo. Un milite che li sorveglia dalla mattina alla sera, che li segue – a un metro di distanza [...] Nelle loro passeggiate, li aspetta davanti all'uscio delle mense o a quello dei cameroni, si mette dietro alle loro sedie se essi si siedono a studiare all'aria aperta [...] Per le vie di Ventotene li vedi andare e venire l'uno davanti l'altro di dietro, come un cane. Peggio, come l'ombra che la maledizione di un Dio ti avesse messo alle calcagna. E se il confinato corre, il milite, dietro corre e sbuffa [...] e se piove e il confinato, maligno, munito d'ombrello va a fare un girellino, il milite, dietro, si prende la pioggia. Se il confinato si ferma con degli amici, l'altro si mette lì come un piolo; se parla, apre le orecchie, se si accompagna con altri pedinati, le ombre s'imbrancano a loro volta.²⁶¹

We see, then, that one way to police the politics of an individual is to restrain and control, first and foremost, his body. However, surveillance is also connected the restraint of the

²⁶⁰ Altiero Spinelli, *Il lungo monologo* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1968), 30.

²⁶¹ Jacometti, 36.

mind and of language. Emilio Lussu, interned on the island of Lipari from 1927 until his escape alongside Carlo Rosselli and Francesco Fausto Nitti in 1929, writes that in *confino* “È fatto divieto di parlare di politica.”²⁶² This is to ensure, of course, that the *confinati politici* would not be able to easily organize, but at its core it is an attempt to control power by stripping the *confinati* of their own power, realized through language itself. Consequently, the *confinati* found another way to speak about politics: “Quando parlano di politica in pubblico ricorrono a tutte le metafore consentite dai trattati di retorica e dallo spirito umano. Voi potete benissimo parlare di fascismo per un’ora, senza mai nominarlo.”²⁶³ Thus, as fascism reigns over the dominion of permitted language, the *confinati* must resort to a different kind of language—that which is free from the grips of fascist power—and one that will allow them to engage in resistance.

To understand resistance in *confino*, one must first examine the repressive elements that the *confinati* were resisting. In considering the logic of exile, I turn, once again, to Foucault. As I mentioned earlier, Foucault identifies in biopolitics the attempt to control the relationship between humans and their environment. Foucault refers to the environment in geographical, climatic, and hydrographic terms, though I would add social terms to this definition, as well. That is, the social environment—that which defines social relations and interactions between individuals—must also be considered alongside the natural environment. It is accurate to state that the *confinati* did not represent an actual biological threat to the regime, although, as I discussed in Chapter One, their ideology was framed in biological terms by Mussolini himself. Therefore, it is

²⁶² Emilio Lussu, *La catena*, 66.

²⁶³ Ibid.

through the use of biological metaphors—through language itself—that we find the logic of fascist expulsion, and, in language (specifically through the control over language), we additionally find a tool to exercise power. The French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu notes that

[T]he constitutive power of (religious or political) language, and of the schemes of perception and thought which it procures, is never clearer than in situations of crisis: these *paradoxical* and *extra-ordinary* situations call for an extra-ordinary kind of discourse, capable of raising the practical principles of an ethos to the level of explicit principles which generate (quasi-) systematic responses, and of expressing all the unheard-of and ineffable characteristics of the situation created by the crisis.²⁶⁴

If we consider the whole of the *ventennio* to be a crisis (and here, I am referring to crisis not as a synonym of disaster, but rather a particular moment of importance and opportunity that will give shape to the future), then we must consider the language of the regime in terms of crisis, as well. I am referring to both the language employed by the regime, as well as the control it possessed over that which it designated as legitimate language. Given that the regime possessed control over the press and publication, it was already difficult to disseminate any sort of literature that would be considered subversive. The regime, however, took an extra step in not only rejecting the language of certain individuals, but also their bodies. It is precisely because Mussolini frames the *confinati* in terms of a biological threat (*igiene sociale, profilassi nazionale*)—because he utilizes language that presupposes a crisis—that he is able to legitimize the displacement of rejected bodies as if they were contagious. Within the logic of the fascist regime and the *confini di polizia*, then, language is inseparable from the body, and thus the language and the body of the antifascist stand in opposition to its fascist counterpart. We must,

²⁶⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 128-129.

therefore, consider biopolitics not only through that which makes the biological political, but also that which makes the political biological: a function of language itself. It will be important to keep this in mind when considering the modes of resistance in *confino* and the ways in which language may be utilized to subvert fascist politics.

Those who dared to utilize language outside of the confines of that which was permitted by the regime, that is, those who threatened the symbols, narratives, and vocalization of fascist ideals, had to be eliminated. What is interesting to consider, then, is the dichotomy between mind and body that existed for the *confinati*, as well as the body's relationship to language. To stay in *confino*, as Altiero Spinelli informs us, was a choice:

Essere liberato dipendeva tuttavia da lui. La regola non scritta ma applicata dal regime rispetto ai suoi prigionieri era infatti che chi faceva atto di sottomissione, riconoscendo la grandezza del fascismo e, soprattutto, del suo duce, otteneva dopo un certo tempo, con qualche difficoltà nel caso di carcere, con relativa facilità nel caso del confino, di essere messo in libertà.²⁶⁵

Language must be used to exalt fascism and to confirm its myths, and thus, in the case of those who refused to do so, one finds the locus of resistance in language itself. Indeed, there were cases in which individuals were exiled to *confino* because of “qualche frase poco rispettosa per il duce e per il regime.”²⁶⁶ In policing language, the regime is fabricating mass consent; there can be no antifascists in Italy, and those who are must be dealt with. We see, then, that a *confinato* must acquiesce to the language and the grandiose rhetoric of fascism in order to be released. The function of this is nothing more than to bolster the ubiquitous propaganda of the regime, in which it is revealed that in

²⁶⁵ Spinelli, *Il lungo monologo*, 26.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 25.

Italy there are only fascists. In Mussolini's *Discorso dell'Ascensione*, which I addressed in Chapter One, the *duce* proclaims:

Ma nessuno di questi confinati vuole essere antifascista e qualcuno ha l'aria di essere fascista. Difatti, al 21 maggio dell'anno in corso, su seicentonovantotto confinati hanno dichiarato di non avere svolto alcuna attività politica, sessantuno; di avere da tempo cessato ogni attività politica, duecentottantasei; di non avere svolto attività sovversiva, centottantacinque; di avere da tempo cessato ogni attività sovversiva, centottantadue; di non avere appartenuto a partiti politici, cinquantanove; di essersi dimessi da tempo da partiti politici, sessantanove; hanno fatto atto di sottomissione al regime, ventinove; hanno confermato le proprie idee politiche, ventuno; non hanno fatto affermazione di carattere politico, cinquantadue.²⁶⁷

"No one wants to be antifascist," proclaims Mussolini before demonstrating his point. In fact, according to Mussolini, *confino* has only revealed the widespread acceptance of fascism:

Il fatto che quasi tutti i confinati si sono rivolti a me, deve essere considerato come uno dei più grandi successi del regime fascista; prima di tutto, perché nessuno di costoro voleva avere la taccia di essere antifascista, e, in secondo luogo, perché tutti, nonostante i loro precedenti, sapevano che potevano rivolgersi a me se erano meritevoli di giustizia.²⁶⁸

Mussolini's utterances represent the epitome of legitimate language under fascism, and legitimate language consists of utterances that are assumed to represent the truth. The goal of Mussolini's speech, then, is to assert the widespread support for fascism, or, rather, the negligible support for antifascism. Those *confinati* refusing to utter any sort of approval for Mussolini or the regime sacrifice their bodies and their freedom, for, under fascism, the body cannot be free if language, too, is not free. Consequently, when language is free—that is, when language is not repressed, shaped, or controlled—fascism loses its power.

²⁶⁷ Mussolini, *Opera Omnia*, vol. XXII, 377.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

Coupled with the control over language, at the core of confinement is the control over space and the disciplining of bodies—two essential elements characterizing Foucault’s concept of panopticism. As Emilio Lussu writes about the threat of *confino*, “La pena è per pochi, la minaccia è per tutti.”²⁶⁹ This, of course, is characterized by the State’s initiative to control the body as a collective through the simultaneous threat to control and deport the individual body. For those sent to *confino*, then, one way to engage in resistance is through the reclamation of one’s own body. Following this line of thinking, I part ways with Agamben when he asserts that “The ‘body’ is always already a biopolitical body and bare life, and nothing in it or the economy of its pleasure seems to allow us to find solid ground on which to oppose the demands of sovereign power.”²⁷⁰ If the body is the subject of power, then resistance is to be found through the utilization of the body as agent of power. Corvisieri notes an episode in which some *confinati* destroyed their own beds to furnish weapons out of wood.²⁷¹ As a consequence of this, scores of *confinati* were subject to months in prison, extended *confino* sentences, violence, and even refusal of medical care.²⁷² Thus, this form of resistance is not only a way for the antifascists to maintain their dignity, but also a way to exercise agency in a situation in which their bodies have been sequestered by the regime. Another case of such resistance occurred on the island of Ventotene. In a written testimony, Calogero

²⁶⁹ Lussu, 44. For more on the regime’s surveillance apparatus, see Mauro Canali, *Le spie del regime* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004); Mimmo Franzinelli, *I tentacoli dell’OVRA: agenti, collaborator e vittime della polizia politica fascista* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1999); Franzinelli, *Delatori. Spie e confidenti anonimi: l’arma segreta del regime fascista* (Milan: Mondadori, 2001).

²⁷⁰ Agamben, 187.

²⁷¹ Corvisieri, 168.

²⁷² Ibid.

Barcellona recalls a protest that erupted on the island after the implementation of new regulations for the *confinati*. The police confiscated the various spaces maintained by the *confinati*, including the *spaccio*, the *mense*, and the *biblioteche*, and imposed new regulations that prohibited the *confinati* from sleeping outside of their assigned domicile, ordered their families to leave the *confino* colony, and substituted their residence cards with new ones that contained even stricter regulations.²⁷³ The *confinati* responded by refusing to leave their rooms or collect their daily allowance, and furthermore instituted a hunger strike.²⁷⁴ In carrying out these actions, the *confinati* locate the site of resistance in the body. In responding to the new regulations, which were essentially further attempts to restrict the body, the *confinati* are reclaiming domain over their own bodies, which had been sequestered and restricted by the State. The political body of the *confinato* had been reduced to a biological body, and it is precisely through the utilization of the biological body as site of resistance that the *confinati* are able to reinscribe into it a sense of the political. It is also through the idea of solidarity and collective resistance that we may locate the significance and success of these protests. While violence inflicted upon the individual body does real harm, on the other hand the resistance of the individual must be taken up as collective action to gain concessions. In other words, in the context of *confino*, power may be focused on the individual body, yet the individual is only able to exercise power collectively.

If *confino* in its essence is a form of spatial engineering—an attempt to detain bodies in an unproductive environment—then one way to engage in resistance is to shape

²⁷³ Written testimony in Ghini and Dal Pont, 205.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

that very space, to turn an unproductive space into one that is productive, through the construction of specific “places,” a point I will clarify below. Confinement has long been described as a phenomenon that may foster creative productivity for those who have been immobilized. According to Ellen Nerenberg, “prison is seen as a locus of intellectual and political activity – especially for prisoners of conscience – and imprisonment is thought of as a conditioning factor in the production of writing.”²⁷⁵ For Alberto Jacometti, a socialist who was sent to *confino* on the island of Ventotene in 1941, the experience of *confino* is productive: “Al confino si andava a prendere consigli, si portavano notizie e informazioni che venivano studiate, vagliate, confrontate e completate le une con le altre. Il confino fu, senza alcun dubbio, per molti, una scuola di antifascismo.”²⁷⁶ The idea of productivity is one that Poerio underlines, as well, sharing an anecdote about a *confinato* who wrote graffiti that read “*Immotus nec iners*”: “*fermi ma non inerti*.”²⁷⁷ This sentiment is largely shared among other ex-*confinati*; Giorgio Amendola, for example, a militant communist and partisan, was sentenced to *confino* on the island of Ponza for a total of four years. Amendola writes about study groups in Ponza, where “Erano sconsigliati gli studi tendenti ad una qualificazione individuale ed al conseguimento di un titolo. Favoriti invece gli studi miranti a rafforzare la coscienza politica e rivoluzionaria.”²⁷⁸ Luigi Salvatori even notes that the Communist Party directed its imprisoned members to study in their free time.²⁷⁹ Thus the space of *confino*, ironically, becomes an antifascist space, one that paradoxically fosters a culture of resistance and

²⁷⁵ Nerenberg, 9.

²⁷⁶ Jacometti, 31.

²⁷⁷ See Poerio, 22.

²⁷⁸ Giorgio Amendola, *Un'isola* (Milan: Rizzoli Editore, 1980), 115.

²⁷⁹ Luigi Salvatori, *Al confino e in carcere* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1958), 127.

develops the political consciousness of its inhabitants. Flavio Fornasiero, interned on the island of Lipari, specifically sees *confino* in this manner—that is, not only a “school of antifascism,” but one that aids in developing a more precise politics for those who, like Fornasiero, arrived on the island with a generic antifascist preparation. The presence of intellectuals from various ideological camps (communism, anarchism, socialism, etc.),²⁸⁰ then, allowed the *confinati* to listen to discussions and debates between numerous schools of thought and thus develop a more specific politics.²⁸¹

For Antonio Gramsci, education becomes a crucial element of *confino*.²⁸² In a letter to Piero Sraffa, Gramsci—who was interned on the island of Ustica at the time—writes

Siamo ad Ustica in 30 confinati politici: abbiamo già iniziato tutta una serie di corsi, elementari e di culturale generale, per i diversi gruppi di confinati [...] Speriamo così di trascorrere il tempo senza abbrutirci e giovando agli altri amici, che rappresentano tutta la gamma dei partiti e della preparazione culturale.²⁸³

For Gramsci, studying in *confino* is not simply an activity that is undertaken to pass time. Rather, it is one that is used to combat the dehumanizing conditions of *confino*—those same conditions that strip man of his political existence and reduce him to bare life. In studying literature, history, and culture, among other subjects, one is able to reclaim his own political existence, while also constructing a unique space in which to practice antifascism. At the same time, we see the initial traces of his ideas regarding popular

²⁸⁰ For a sample breakdown of the various political camps on Lipari in 1930, see Poesio, 36.

²⁸¹ Flavio Fornasiero, *Cantavamo l'Internazionale* (Milan: La Pietra, 1977), 27.

²⁸² Ghini and Dal Pont note that, even in the first days of *confino* there were all types of classes, such as Italian language, arithmetic, history, geography, statistics, political economy, and others (75). See 75-77 for details on other courses and subjects studied.

²⁸³ Letter to Piero Sraffa on December 21, 1926. Antonio Gramsci, *Lettere dal carcere* (Turin: Einaudi, 1977), 16.

education of the masses, outlined in greater detail in his *Quaderni del carcere*. In his January 2, 1927 letter to Piero Sraffa, for example, Gramsci writes “abbiamo cercato di contemperare la necessità di un ordine scolastico graduale col fatto che gli allievi, anche se talvolta semianalfabeti, sono intellettualmente sviluppati.”²⁸⁴ According to Gramsci, every man is an intellectual; this does not mean that every man fulfills the function of an intellectual within society, yet we also cannot speak of non-intellectuals, for they do not exist.²⁸⁵ In his *Quaderni del carcere*, Gramsci writes

Non c'è attività umana da cui si possa escludere ogni intervento intellettuale, non si può separare l'homo faber dall'homo sapiens. Ogni uomo infine, all'infuori della sua professione esplica una qualche attività intellettuale, è cioè un «filosofo», un artista, un uomo di gusto, partecipa di una concezione del mondo, ha una consapevole linea di condotta morale, quindi contribuisce a sostenere o a modificare una concezione del mondo, cioè a suscitare nuovi modi di pensare.²⁸⁶

The education of the working class in *confino*—including those who cannot read—then, is crucial in the struggle against fascism. As he writes in the *Quaderni*, “Ogni rapporto di ‘egemonia’ è necessariamente un rapporto pedagogico.”²⁸⁷ Indeed, Silvia Vecchini notes that, according to Piero Grifone,

fu proprio Gramsci a insegnare loro che per liberare l'Italia dal fascismo e dal capitalismo, bisognava innanzitutto andare alle radici della storia nazionale italiana. La ricerca culturale messa in atto appare in questo ambito l'unica forma possibile di lotta al fascismo, volta a comprendere quella cultura, le condizioni di esistenza di tale egemonia, al fine di sconfiggerla storicamente e strutturalmente.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁴ Letter to Piero Sraffa on January 2, 1927. Ibid., 18.

²⁸⁵ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, vol. 3, edited by Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), 1550.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 1550-1551.

²⁸⁷ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, vol. 2, 1331.

²⁸⁸ Silvia Vecchini, “Il confino di polizia: fonti e studi,” *Teca* n. 0 (September 2011): 7-8. For more on education, schooling, and the libraries constructed in *confino*, see Poerio, especially 150-161.

To understand Italy's history is to understand the actions and compromises that created the conditions in which fascism could thrive, which in turn is to understand what needed to be done to ensure its defeat.

Of course, no school is truly complete without a library. In Ventotene, Jacometti reports that there was a library—"l'alimento primo del confino"—that contained around 3,000 volumes.²⁸⁹ In Ponza, too, Camilla Ravera writes about the library, equipped with "un reparto clandestino, comprendente opere giunte ai compagni clandestinamente, o sfuggite, specialmente all'inizio del confino, al controllo: opere di Marx, Engels, Lenin, Labriola, Plechanov, Rosa Luxemburg, Stalin, Bucharin, Dimitrov, variamente dissimulate e conservate."²⁹⁰ We can note, then, that the regime's surveillance apparatus in *confino* existed not only to immobilize the bodies of those in exile—ensuring that they could not escape—but also to immobilize their minds in an attempt to halt further development of an antifascist politics. That is, while they were removed from society because they were considered dangerous, the *confinati* did not cease to be threats to Italian society in the eyes of the regime once confined. It is important to note that the libraries were constructed and maintained by the *confinati* themselves, who contributed a few *lire* each month in order to acquire new books.²⁹¹ The titles chosen to be a part of the library, then, held extreme importance, as they were acquired to build, in a way, a sort of antifascist syllabus, one that would be crucial in continuing to organize:

Il partito comunista riconosce nel libro e nella lettura, come processo attiva, il potenziale, la capacità di trascendere l'isolamento, il degrado della reclusione e dunque di preservarsi dall'ozio e lo sfrutta guadagnando nuova forza all'organizzazione intera che fa delle scuole e delle biblioteche il perno del progetto

²⁸⁹ Jacometti, 107.

²⁹⁰ Camilla Ravera, *Diario di trent'anni: 1913-1943* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1973), 602.

²⁹¹ Poerio, 156.

pedagogico antifascista, caricando i confinati di grandi responsabilità presenti e future.²⁹²

Yet, when we speak of resistance in the case of reading, studying, and building libraries we must clarify a couple of points: while forming reading groups that were meant to shape the politics of the *confinati* is an act of resistance in and of itself, the effects of this are not necessarily immediate. That is, we must differentiate intellectual and political activity in this case from other forms of resistance—resistance that finds its locus in the body, for example, a hunger strike—for a material, perceivable outcome does not immediately present itself: “leggere diventa un processo attivo, che se fatto coscientemente può portare a plasmare il proprio futuro, dei loro figli e della società in generale.”²⁹³ For Amendola, his time spent in *confini* would prepare him for his future struggles as a partisan and an organizer and politician in the *Partito Comunista Italiano* (PCI).²⁹⁴ *Confini*, then, comes to represent a formative experience and crucial training for those who participated in the Italian Resistance between 1943 and 1945, as does exile and confinement in general. As Amendola states in an interview on antifascism,

Il fatto che nel '43 uscissero dal carcere e dal confino migliaia di comunisti, colti, preparati, e tanti altri antifascisti, GL, socialisti; il fatto che tanti tornassero dall'emigrazione, ha fatto sì che noi fossimo in grado di dare al movimento partigiano una direzione politica di sinistra; senza di che non ci sarebbe stato un movimento partigiano.²⁹⁵

²⁹² Ibid., 156-157.

²⁹³ Vecchini, 9.

²⁹⁴ Amendola, *Un'isola*, 141.

²⁹⁵ Giorgio Amendola, *Intervista sull'antifascismo* (Bari: Economica Laterza, 1994), 142-143.

Thus, we may conclude that the *ex-confinati* would become the main actors in the reconstruction of the Italian and European community in the aftermath of World War II, a concept that I will examine further in the final chapter of this dissertation.

In *confinio* itself we must furthermore consider the physical construction of fascist and antifascist spaces. The *mensa*, in particular, was a space in which various ideologies were upheld, and one in which political discussions and organizing could take place. According to Poerio, the first *mense* came about in Ustica before the idea spread to the other islands.²⁹⁶ On the significance of the *mense*, Poerio writes, “avere una mensa propria era un elemento importante nella costruzione e manifestazione di un’identità e di un’appartenenza politica.”²⁹⁷ Thus the *mense*—dining halls founded by the *confinati*—were crucial in building a political foundation in the colonies. *Mense* of all types existed, with some belonging to the communists, anarchists, and socialists, among others. The *mense* constituted a true battle over the control of space and ideology with *confinio*; on the island of Ventotene, for example, Jacometti notes that “il vecchio direttore, Meo, se mette a sbraitare: ‘Basta con i comunisti, le mense le voglio controllare io.’ Detto fatto, ne prende tre (D, E, F) toglie la direzione in carica e la sostituisce con creature sue (manciuriani).”²⁹⁸ The *manciuriani* were the *confinati* without allegiance to any of the specific political groups, and thus were perceived as siding with the fascist authorities in the colony. Jacometti explains that the *manciuriano* was the *confinato* who

parla ai militi e agli agenti, alza la mano al momento degli appelli o, più subdolamente, quando va in direzione, si presta a rendere all’autorità i servizi che questa gli richiede; da quello di cuoco o sguattero per le mense poliziesche a quello di

²⁹⁶ Poerio, 145.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 147.

²⁹⁸ Jacometti, 97.

informatore, di spia, di provocatore.²⁹⁹

Therefore, it was important for the *confinati politici* to have their own space, one where they could organize and speak freely, and one that contrasted that of the *manciuriani*.

Ilaria Poerio writes about the political success of these *mense* and makes the claim that “la mensa costituisce a tutti gli effetti un laboratorio riuscito di socialismo puro.”³⁰⁰

Indeed, the *confinati* themselves organized and managed the *mense*, an example of collective labor and power under repressive conditions that had otherwise rendered them powerless.

As I have previously noted, the various *mense* corresponded to the numerous ideologies and political movements that were represented in the *confini* colonies. Ernesto Rossi, an antifascist sentenced to *confini* in 1938 for five years on the island of Ventotene, paints the *mensa* of *Giustizia e Libertà* (a liberal-socialist, antifascist political movement) in the *Vassoio di Ventotene* (completed in 1940),³⁰¹ and specifically in the panel titled *Il brindisi*. The panel depicts fourteen figures in the *mensa* of *Giustizia e Libertà* who are raising their glasses in a toast. The painting bares striking resemblance to Leonardo da Vinci’s *The Last Supper*, as all those depicted are placed on one side of a long table, with none of their backs turned to us. The anarchist Giovanni Domaschi, seated at the table on the right side of the painting, recalls the apostle Matthew in *The*

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 29.

³⁰⁰ Poerio, 146.

³⁰¹ Ernesto Rossi, *Vassoio di Ventotene*, 1940, Istituto storico della Resistenza in Toscana, Florence. According to Massimo Mila, the painting was to be a wedding gift for his nephew. Massimo Mila, “Le loro prigionie: da Regina Coeli a Ventotene,” *Ernesto Rossi. Un democratico ribelle: Cospirazione antifascista, carcere, confino*, edited by Giuseppe Armani (Milan: Kaos edizioni, 2001), 326.

Last Supper, as his pose is almost identical. The allusion to Leonardo's painting may furthermore be identified by the symbol of *Giustizia e Libertà* (a flaming sword), which hangs on the back wall and resembles a cross, thus suggesting an almost divine prerogative in fighting fascism. There is no figure that sits at the true center as Jesus does in Leonardo's painting (this suggests the multi-tendential nature of *Giustizia e Libertà*, which consisted of socialists, democrats, and republicans, among others, and the idea that fascism would only be defeated through a collective effort), although the figure who is near the center—Mario Maovaz—certainly draws the most attention. As Massimo Mila notes,

l'uomo che fa il saluto romano al centro del disegno *Il brindisi* è Maovaz (anche lui fucilato dai Tedeschi): a Ventotene era stato il protagonista della battaglia contro il saluto romano, che le camicie nere pretendevano dai confinati, e per questo rifiuto era anche stato ricacciato in galera.³⁰²

What are we to make of Rossi's decision to paint Maovaz performing the fascist salute in this panel? Mila asserts that the painting emphasizes "aspetti umoristici" and specifically "qualche eco sarcastica,"³⁰³ but I believe we can read beyond parody, as well. In painting him in this way, Rossi means to testify to the iron will of Maovaz in refusing to satisfy the demands of the Fascist officials. That is, Rossi is stressing that it is only in the fictional world of his painting that Maovaz would ever perform this salute, despite the very tangible consequences for not doing so in the real world. If we are to read Maovaz as the central figure of the painting, then he almost becomes a Christ-like figure, as his refusal to perform the fascist salute represents a sacrifice made for the resistance. Rossi is prescient in his depiction, as Maovaz may represent the future sacrifices that will be

³⁰² Mila, 327.

³⁰³ Ibid.

made for the resistance (Maovaz was later shot by the Germans). Furthermore, Maovaz was the librarian for the library build by the *confinati* in Ventotene; thus, in seating him at the center of the table, Rossi is also underlining the importance of reading and studying in *confinamento* for the future of the antifascist movement.³⁰⁴ In the section that follows, I will continue to look at the representation of resistance in *confinamento* through the contemporary lens of Wu Ming 1's novel *La macchina del vento*, a novel in which the *confinati*'s resistance is presented as crucial to the construction of Italy's future.

Chapter 4.2 The Birth of the Resistance in Wu Ming 1's *La macchina del vento*

Wu Ming 1's most recent novel, *La macchina del vento* (2019) narrates the story of Erminio, a young socialist exiled on the island of Ventotene. The title is a play on H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (*La macchina del tempo*), and in my analysis of the novel I will unpack the complicated relationship between politics, resistance, and temporality. I demonstrate how the book articulates a novel interpretation of the Italian resistance to fascism; as Wu Ming 1 stated in an interview with *Jacobin*:

A Ventotene la Resistenza fu prefigurata ben prima che sul continente [...] l'impressione che si ricava leggendo gli epistolari dei confinati, le biografie e autobiografie, le ricostruzioni storiografiche, è proprio che su quell'isola gli antifascisti si siano consciamente preparati a prender il proprio posto nella Resistenza, e da ben prima del 25 luglio del '43.³⁰⁵

In the section that follows, I will examine the role of resistance in *La macchina del vento* and explore the ways in which resistance to the fascist regime on the island of Ventotene

³⁰⁴ For more information on the life and politics of Mario Maovaz, see Roberto Spazzali, *Il bibliotecario di Ventotene. Mario Maovaz: un rivoluzionario per l'Europa dei popoli e l'autonomismo Triestino* (Trieste: Istituto regionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione nel Friuli Venezia Giulia, 2017).

³⁰⁵ Wu Ming 1 and Giuliano Santoro, "Proletari di tutti gli universi paralleli unitevi!," *Jacobin Italia*, 29 April 2019, <https://jacobinitalia.it/proletari-di-tutti-gli-universi-paralleli-unitevi/>

is theorized and practiced in the novel. I argue that the novel reveals how resistance in *confino* is not always an action that is intended bear fruit in the present—that is, it is not necessarily a response that seeks to resolve the oppressive conditions of the present (although this could certainly be the case, as well)—but instead one that is intended to prepare the *confinati* for their future struggle.

Greek mythology plays a large role in the novel, with various gods siding with the fascists and others with the antifascists. Erminio, before his arrest and subsequent sentence to *confino*, studied literature in Bologna, and was preparing to write his thesis on the Italian archipelagos in Greek mythology. Throughout the novel, we are immersed into what seems to be at times Erminio's imagination regarding the presence of Greek gods on the island of Ventotene, while at other times it seems as if Wu Ming 1 wants to suggest that they actually have a physical, non-imagined presence on the island and in the battle between fascism and antifascism. We learn, for example, that Poseidon, “dio dell’olio di ricino, da tempo in combutta col regime”³⁰⁶ sides squarely with the fascists. There are others, as well: Cercyon, “torturatore per conto della polizia politica”; the one-eyed giant Polyphemus, “fascista antemarcia” who lost his eye “in uno scontro con gli Arditi del Popolo”; the giant Antaeus, “caporione della milizia.”³⁰⁷ In the novel, then, the struggle against fascism is painted as a colossal task, but not one that is impossible to overcome. For example, the *Arditi del Popolo*—a historical, militant antifascist group—fight against Polyphemus and cause him to lose his eye, suggesting that the giant of fascism could be

³⁰⁶ Wu Ming 1, *La macchina del vento* (Turin: Einaudi, 2019), 25.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

defeated,³⁰⁸ why also ascribing a mythical significance to resistance in *confino*, an idea I will discuss further along in the section.

La macchina del vento—like the texts examined in the earlier part of this chapter—affirms *confino* as a politically productive experience: “Eppure, si pensava e si creava [...] Il regime non poteva pretendere che quei cervelli smettessero di funzionare. Nonostante le restrizioni, la censura, le angherie, quelle menti si influenzavano a vicenda.”³⁰⁹ This is due, in part, to the existence of the library that was directed by the *confinati*. Its purpose lies not only in the material it provides for studying, but also in maintaining relationships among the various political tendencies in *confino*: “La gestiva un comitato nel quale era rappresentata ogni tribù. Era l’unico organo unitario, il solo ambito nel quale non si congelarono mai i rapporti coi comunisti [...] Raffreddati, sì, congelati mai. I libri erano troppo importanti.”³¹⁰ Books become a tool for education, but also a weapon for resistance: “la biblioteca era tollerata ma *temuta*, sottoposta a occhiate sorveglianze e repentine perquisizioni.”³¹¹ To resist the regime and be sent to *confino* is, in some ways, the only path to liberty in fascist Italy, as it allows the *confinati* to continue their political education. Erminio expresses this sentiment by stating that “a Ventotene

³⁰⁸ For a history of the *Arditi del Popolo*, see Marco Rossi, *Arditi, non gendarmi! Dall’arditismo di guerra agli Arditi del Popolo: 1917-1922* (Pisa: BFS, 1997); Eros Francescangeli, *Arditi del Popolo: Argo Secondari e la prima organizzazione antifascista (1917-1922)* (Rome: Odradek, 2009); Luigi Balsamini, *Gli Arditi del Popolo: dalla guerra alla difesa* (Casalvelino Scalo: Galzerano, 2002); Andrea Staid, *Gli Arditi del Popolo: la prima lotta armata al fascismo 1921-1922* (Milan: Le milieu, 2015); Valerio Gentili, *Roma combattente: dal “biennio rosso” agli Arditi del Popolo, la storia mai raccontata degli uomini e delle organizzazioni che inventarono la lotta armata in Italia* (Rome: Castelvechi, 2010); Ivan Fuschini, *Gli Arditi del Popolo* (Ravenna: Longo, 1994).

³⁰⁹ Wu Ming 1, 34.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 186.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 187. Emphasis mine.

c'era più libertà di pensiero che nel resto d'Italia.”³¹² It is here, for example, that Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi, and Eugenio Colorni wrote the *Manifesto di Ventotene*: a political manifesto that would become one of the founding documents of the European Union. In the novel, the document plays a central role as it circulates around the island, and thus reveals how *confino* becomes indispensable preparation for the future. Spinelli additionally solicits feedback from the other *confinati*, including Erminio, who does not adhere to the tenets laid out in the document and even writes a lengthy rebuttal of his own.³¹³

In exile, then, the *confinati* did not have to hide their political and ideological propensities; despite the directive that forbid the discussion of politics, actions such as the formation of the various *mense* where *confinati* of similar political inclinations could meet demonstrates a degree of freedom that did not exist in Italy following the dissolution of all political parties. Erminio later states, “se avessimo alzato il braccio nel saluto romano, se avessimo accettato il fascismo e rinnegato il socialismo, il marxismo, l'anarchia [...] Il confino sarebbe diventato semplice ammonizione, e più tardi libertà, cioè schiavitù come quella degli altri.”³¹⁴ *Confino*, then, despite being created as a fascist institution, becomes one of the only spaces of antifascism in Italy, one that would prove to be fertile ground for political organization and the birth of the Italian resistance. For example, the communists, Erminio tells us, “avevano le loro istituzioni: un centro politico, scuole quadri e una biblioteca segreta. I libri di Marx, Engels, Lenin e Stalin stavano in botole e doppi fondi di armadi, e quando uscivano circolavano tra copertine

³¹² Ibid., 34

³¹³ Ibid., 270-274.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 51.

ingannevoli.”³¹⁵ In exile, political education through reading and studying is the way in which one breaks through the immobility and unproductive existence of *confinò*, the way in which one combats the attempt to “prevent [the] brain from working for twenty years,” as was suggested in Gramsci’s trial. Immobility, then, does not presuppose an inherent lack of a productivity for the *confinati*, an idea to which Wu Ming 1 alludes through Giacomo—a physicist and member of *Giustizia e Libertà* who is also in *confinò* in the novel. Giacomo states “Anche un punto che sta fermo nello spazio in realtà si muove, perché si muove nel tempo.”³¹⁶ Those in *confinò*, then, despite the spatial restrictions imposed on them, do not remain immobile in that they are preparing and participating in acts of resistance that will have a profound effect on the future, suggesting the idea that acts of resistance in the present need not yield immediate results. This is perhaps the main point that Wu Ming 1 wants to demonstrate in his work. There is no denying that those who lived through *confinò* and subsequently reflected on their experience recognize the importance of studying in exile, as I spoke about in the first part of this chapter, but, in *La macchina del vento*, education is the central focus, from the reading, writing, and political education of the *confinati* to Erminio’s incomplete thesis on the role of the sea and the Italian archipelagos in Greek mythology.³¹⁷ *Confinò* proves to be a formative experience for Erminio, as he says, “Soltanto in galera e al confino, a contatto con tanti compagni e con tutto il tempo del mondo per leggere e discutere, avrei rafforzato le mie basi e affinato i miei strumenti.”³¹⁸ The emphasis in the above quote is the author’s, and its

³¹⁵ Ibid., 57.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 64.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 55.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 280.

function is to demonstrate how—in a seemingly timeless and immobile world—education and studying are tools that will be utilized to construct the future of Italy and the European continent.

If, however, studying to build one's politics is a way to engage in resistance, it does not exclude the inevitable development of debate amongst those in *confino*. A significant moment of tension in the novel is one that explores the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 and the reaction of communists such as Mauro Scoccimarro and Pietro Secchia, who supported the pact. The non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany proved to be controversial amongst the parties of the Left, with disagreements erupting within the same parties themselves. Although a school of antifascism, *confino* by no means presented a united strategy by which to resist fascism. Wu Ming 1 writes, "La giravolta di Stalin aveva lasciato di stucco l'antifascismo, in tutto il mondo e anche a Ventotene."³¹⁹ In *confino*, then, we witness the continuation of left politics and the debate over which direction to take regarding antifascism. For example, Umberto Terracini—one of the founders of the PCI—vehemently opposed the non-aggression pact and was heavily criticized for taking a position against the party line. In the novel, Scoccimarro exclaims "Umberto va espulso! Si è messo contro la linea del partito e dell'Internazionale! Ormai pencola verso il trotskismo."³²⁰ Indeed, Terracini would subsequently be expelled from the PCI for his opposition, only to be reinstated in 1943. When Spinelli, Rossi, and Colorni present their vision of a united Europe to Erminio, he responds with various objections and questions the willingness of the other

³¹⁹ Ibid., 57.

³²⁰ Ibid., 58.

factions/parties to adopt the same position. Thus, Wu Ming 1 paints a picture of the resistance as one that is not entirely united in its opposition to fascism, despite the continued political organizing and activity of those who were sent to *confini*. In this way, Wu Ming 1 dispels of any romantic notion of a single united front formed in *confini* in preparation to go to battle against fascism and, instead, highlights the fractures among the *confinati* and the various political tendencies that were present on the island of Ventotene.

Although these fractures existed amongst the *confinati*, the novel does work toward the construction of a sense of unity amongst them. One day, during roll call, Giacomo loses his balance and runs into one of the fascist guards, who proceeds to push him away, sparking a series of events in which envelopes and paperwork are scattered across the room and ink spills on the guards. This angers the guards, who are about to punish Giacomo, before Sandro Pertini intervenes, putting himself between Neri Chiaramantesi—one of the most hated fascist guards on the island, alongside his brother, Gabriello—and the *confinati*.³²¹ Antifascists of all tendencies rally behind Pertini in order to protect Giacomo:

Al fianco di Pertini – oltre a me, che gli ero rimasto accanto – si schierò Domaschi, con le sue mani di fabbro, poi si disposero i capi comunisti – Secchia, Scoccimarro, il siciliano Li Causi e anche Terracini, perché in quel momento non valevano i dissensi politici – e i giellisti: Traquandi, Fancello, Dino Roberto. C’era anche Spinelli, col suo fisico temibile. C’era Ravaoli, pronto a usare la zanetta. Tra gli anarchici c’erano magnifici volti da pendagli da forca. Tra i manciuriani c’erano *autentici* pendagli da forca. C’erano sloveni, croati, albanesi, e c’era Mengestú. C’eravamo tutti. Per la prima volta, un fronte unico.³²²

³²¹ Neri and Gabriello Chiaramantesi are both characters in Sem Benelli’s play *La cena delle beffe*. Benelli was among of the cosigners of the 1925 *Manifesto degli intellettuali antifascisti*.

³²² Wu Ming 1, *La macchina*, 124.

In this passage, we witness for the first time in the novel the *confinati* coming together as a single unit in the struggle against fascism. Up until this point, the reader may only understand the *confinati* as a homogenous group in their shared persecution under the regime. Indeed, Wu Ming 1 strives to exhibit the differences among the *confinati* in calling attention to the various political factions and their respective *mense* and the disagreements that arise with regard to their different political ideologies. In the above passage, then, it is just as important to name those same political ideologies/factions one by one in order to assert the momentous comradeship and unity of the action. In reminiscing on this moment, Erminio directly ties the event to the future downfall of Italy's fascist regime: "Quando ci ripenso, mi gonfia ancora d'orgoglio, l'orgoglio di essere stato compagno di lotta di quell'uomo [Pertini], di *tutti* quegli uomini. E non posso non collegare quella mattina di fine giugno del '40 al 26 luglio di tre anni più tardi."³²³

The episode takes on mythological importance when we later learn that the Chiaramantesi brothers are actually the Aloadae, Otus and Ephialtes (sons of Poseidon and Iphimedia), two giants in Greek mythology. Much like the struggle against Polyphemus mentioned at the beginning of the novel, this encounter underlines the gargantuan task of defeating fascism, while also sealing the Italian Resistance in its own mythos. Thus, Wu Ming 1 is suggesting that the figureheads of the Resistance and the future Italian Republic took on an almost mythical standing for their involvement in the struggle against fascism and in their efforts to (re)build the Italian nation: an effort that started well before the collapse of the regime in 1943. Wu Ming 1, then, locates the origin myth of the Italian Resistance not during the period of the Nazi occupation of Italy,

³²³ Ibid., 125.

but rather in *confino* itself. Wu Ming 1 furthermore provides origin stories for artifacts created in *confino*, such as the “Vassoio di Ventotene,” about which I spoke in the first part of this chapter. Rossi shows Erminio the painting he has completed, and Erminio notes the figure of Aeolus at the center of the painting, who sends a gust of wind toward Poseidon, knocking the crown off of his head.³²⁴ For Wu Ming 1, then, the creation of art in *confino* is also a form of resistance in that it is a political statement. If in Wu Ming 1’s book Poseidon fights alongside the fascists, then Rossi’s depiction of Aeolus who knocks off Poseidon’s crown represents the eventual unseating of fascist power in Italy.

Although this episode represents an act of resistance in the face of fascist aggression, we also see that, in *confino*, sometimes the best mode of resistance is not to resist at all. When Giuseppe Piancastelli falls ill with a case of peritonitis,³²⁵ the fascist officials on the island refuse to bring him to a hospital in order to receive adequate care. Eventually, he is brought to a hospital in Formia where he subsequently dies. Erminio and the other *confinati* are furious and are on the edge of revolt, but ultimately decide against it:

Se penso a un momento in cui fummo davvero prossimi alla rivolta, penso a quel 5 luglio. Il caldo, la fame, l’isolamento, gli abusi subiti, l’arroganza dei fascisti, un compagno appena ucciso – sì, ucciso – e l’altro ricoverato in gravi condizioni... Tutto questo ci avrebbe resi ferini, e gli istinti avrebbero prevalso, se i compagni più lucidi non ci avessero riportati alla ragione.³²⁶

Cosa avremmo ottenuto, rivoltandoci? Avremmo preso le bastonate e forse il piombo, per poi essere di nuovo sparpagliati nelle carceri del regno, subire altri processi e condanne, perdere quello che a Ventotene avevamo messo su – le mense, la biblioteca, le scuole clandestine – e ricominciare da capo chissà dove.³²⁷

³²⁴ See *ibid.*, 180-181.

³²⁵ For a short biography of Piancastelli, see the *Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d’Italia*, 25 July 2010, <https://www.anpi.it/donne-e-uomini/1770/giuseppe-piancastelli>

³²⁶ Wu Ming 1, 146.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

Resistance here, then, is not codified in a physical response, but rather in the knowledge that such a response would be detrimental to the cause of the *confinati*. Instead of responding to the fascist violence in an uprising, which may have led to prison sentences for the *confinati* and the dissolution of the institutions they created in *confino*, their mode of resisting is a way to continue the work that they have started, even in the face of injustice. The passage here is also a reminder of Erminio's previous statement, which I spoke about earlier, regarding freedom in *confino*. In this situation, to revolt would have meant the loss of the freedom to organize and prepare for the Italy that would be constructed after the fall of fascism.

In the novel, then, resistance is closely related to various concepts of time. Time itself plays an important role in the novel, from the concept of the time machine to the clock in the piazza that never functions correctly. For Erminio, the clock is a symbol of his condition in *confino*: “forse che il confino non marcia a un tempo tutto suo?”³²⁸ The clock, then, represents the way in which *confino* is grounded in a space that exists outside of time, a concept I discussed in Chapter Two. Erminio continues, “E ogni tanto penso che se fosse un confinato a riparare l'orologio, se fossi proprio io a ripararlo *alla buon'ora*, sarebbe come un messaggio inviato al nostro futuro.”³²⁹ Erminio's statement underscores the important role that the *confinato* will play in Italy's future. If the inaccuracy of the clock demonstrates the way in which the space of *confino* existed outside of time, and therefore independent from history, it is with the intervention of the *confinati*—with their resistance—that the course of history is destined to change. This

³²⁸ Ibid., 68.

³²⁹ Ibid.

concept is most clearly expressed by another *confinato* on the island, Guido Ravaioli, in a section which, as Wu Ming 1 suggests,³³⁰ is one of the key passages in the novel:

Che il duce verrà giù lo pensiamo tutti, ormai la questione è *quando*. Non c'è mica da rallegrarsi, intendiamoci, ch  le idiozie di quella patacca non le pagher  solo il regime: le pagher  l'Italia, e noi ereditiamo le macerie. Per  noi vediamo l'occasione di ricostruire! Invece l , – punt  il bastone in direzione del continente, – la maggior parte della gente ancora sonnecchia, intorpidita dal fascismo. Qui vediamo il futuro, mentre nel resto d'Italia non ne hanno la minima idea! E allora chi sono i veri *isolati*, chi sono i veri *prigionieri del loro tempo*? Pensateci: la vera macchina del tempo   quest'isola, questa comunit  di reietti! Datemi retta, – e sollev  alto il bastone, la testa di serpente scintillante nella luce del lampadario, – la macchina del tempo siamo noi!³³¹

Contrary, then, to other stories of *confino* that paint the space in which these individuals are exiled as a space that is stuck in time, Wu Ming 1 asserts that it is, instead, a space occupied by those who have broken the chains of time and are working to construct a future beyond fascism.

Wu Ming 1 plays with the idea of the construction of a future Italy both through the organizing in which the *confinati* participate, as well as through the idea of the *confinati* to construct an actual time machine and travel to a future where fascism no longer rules in Italy.³³² This is, of course, a fantastical goal, one that adds to the mythical frame of the novel a science-fiction element, but it serves to demonstrate that the *confinati* are builders, the main architects of an inherently antifascist Italy and Europe. We will also come to understand, as the goddess Athena explains, that “Pandataria [the Latin name for Ventotene] ha uno scorrere del tempo tutto suo, per un'antica svista di Chronos.”³³³ However, rather than *chronos*, time with regard to its quantitative nature, *La*

³³⁰ Wu Ming 1 and Giuliano Santoro, “Proletari di tutti gli universi paralleli unitevi!”

³³¹ Wu Ming 1, *La macchina del vento*, 234.

³³² *Ibid.*, 149-151.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

macchina del vento comments on the importance of *kairos*: “il tempo supremo della consapevolezza e delle scelte,”³³⁴ that is, time with regard to its qualitative nature. In Ancient Greek, *kairos* (καιρός) referred to “the right point of time, the proper time or season of action, the exact or critical time.”³³⁵ Thus, imprisonment in *confini* presents itself as a moment of *kairos*—a crucial moment in which the *confinati* would begin to construct the future of an antifascist Italy and European continent. As Ernesto Rossi states in the novel, “bisogna essere su un’isola come questa, in un momento come questo, durante una guerra come questa.”³³⁶ The *kairos* of antifascism, then, relies not only on the exigencies of a specific time, but also those of a certain place. Rossi’s statement anticipates a discussion between Erminio, Spinelli, Colorni, and himself about the creation of a federation of European states: their response to the wars fought among European countries in their lifetime and a foreshadowing of the drafting of the “Manifesto di Ventotene.”

Wu Ming 1 also uses the concept of the time machine to allude to the international struggle against fascism. When the *confinati* are discussing the possibility of traveling to the future to a time after the fall of fascism, someone also mentions the possibility of traveling to the past in order to kill Mussolini. This leads one of the *confinati* to question how that can be possible: “Scusate, ma se andiamo nel passato e lo ammazziamo, allora lo abbiamo ammazzato. Ma se lo abbiamo ammazzato, perché oggi ce l’abbiamo ancora tra i coglioni?”³³⁷ The *confinato* speaking here touches on a logical

³³⁴ Ibid., 77.

³³⁵ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), 728.

³³⁶ Wu Ming 1, *La macchina del vento*, 102.

³³⁷ Ibid., 151.

paradox of time travel, that is, traveling to the past to change the future would eliminate that very same need to travel to the past, but another responds: “Perché se andiamo ad ammazzarlo nel ’16, creiamo un altro corso degli eventi, diverso da quello che noi abbiamo vissuto.”³³⁸ The comment about parallel universes leads one *confinato* to exclaim, “Proletari di tutti gli universi paralleli unitevi.”³³⁹ The expression used by the *confinati* in the novel should not be understood, of course, as a literal rallying cry for the inhabitants of all parallel universes. Instead, it is an obvious nod to the famous expression in Marx And Engels’ *Communist Manifesto*, “Workers of the world, unite!” Here, then, in connecting the two expressions, Wu Ming 1 is underlining the importance of the international struggle against fascism, a concept that many *confinati* would come to understand well, as I will speak about in the next chapter. It is not enough to oppose Mussolini and the fascist regime within Italy; effective resistance to fascism presupposes international solidarity and action.

Even language is connected to time, mainly through the “*linguaggio notturno*,” a certain language only spoken at night, one that is opposed to the “*linguaggio diurno*,” which Altiero Spinelli—in *Il linguaggio notturno*—states “non può non essere un linguaggio realista che soppesa le forze esistenti.”³⁴⁰ For Erminio, the *linguaggio notturno*, despite being opposed to the “realistic” language of the day, “non aveva cornici, passava di visione in visione, generava paradossi, apriva scenari, descriveva gli effetti di incursioni in altre epoche.”³⁴¹ The *linguaggio notturno*, then, is one that defies

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid., 152.

³⁴⁰ Altiero Spinelli, *Il linguaggio notturno*, edited by Luciano Angelino (Genoa: Il melangolo, 2006), 71.

³⁴¹ Wu Ming 1, *La macchina*, 179.

reality. It is a language that serves to meditate on possibilities—even those that are utopian in nature—rather than realities. Wu Ming 1 refers to the *linguaggio notturno* as “quello delle visioni compensatorie, delle fantasticherie che aiutano a resistere.

Fantasticherie sempre legate al *proiettarsi in avanti*, al superare le pastoie del presente.

Di queste fantasie Erminio arriva a comprendere l'importanza, il valore, la pulsione utopica.”³⁴² To imagine the end of fascism is, for the *confinati*, to imagine a utopia.

Indeed, the beginning of the narrative takes place in 1939, seventeen years after the beginning of the fascist era in Italy, with no end in sight. To carry out a revolution—to flip the normal order of things—is, in Michael Hardt's words, “to instigate utopia every day.”³⁴³

The moment of *kairos* arrives for the *confinati* when the news of the fall of Mussolini's regime arrives on the island. The *confinati* form a committee to speak with the director of the colony, with representatives from each “tribe” on the island:

Girammo per la piazza e le vie, cercando i capi delle tribù. Nel caso degli anarchici, che capi non avevano, cercammo chi era ritenuto più autorevole, e trovammo Domaschi. Poi Fancello per Gielle, Scoccimarro e Secchi per i comunisti, Spinelli per i federalisti e due croati d'Istria, Ante Babić e Anton Franković. Oltre a Pertini, ovviamente, per noi socialisti, e a Fundo per gli albanesi.³⁴⁴

Although we may take note of the disagreements and strategies among the various schools of antifascism on the island that are present throughout the novel, when the moment of *kairos* arrives for the *confinati* the only sensible response is to form a united

³⁴² Wu Ming 1, “Proletari di tutti gli universi paralleli unitevi.”

³⁴³ Michael Hardt, interview in *Examined Life*, directed by Astra Taylor, Zeitgeist Films, 2008.

³⁴⁴ Wu Ming 1, *La macchina del vento*, 310.

antifascist front to take the lead in the (re)construction of Italy—one which would start, first and foremost, in the *confino* colonies themselves.

Thus, despite the repressive politics of the fascist regime, the *confinati* were able to engage in resistance, transforming the immobile space of *confino* into a productive space in creative, intellectual, and political terms. Resistance can take many forms, manifesting in the immediate subversion of power dynamics in the present or preparing oneself for the inevitable struggles and battles of the future. In the next chapter, I more closely examine this very idea, as well as the larger role the *confinati* played in reconstructing the nation and Europe through a commitment to international antifascism.

Chapter Five Theorizing and (Re)constructing the New Italy and Europe

5.1 Carlo Rosselli, Italian Antifascism, and the Spanish Civil War

In the preceding chapters, I have analyzed at length internal exile within Italy and the efforts of the *confinati* to combat Italian fascism. I have considered both the regime's repressive politics and surveillance mechanisms that allowed it to carry out fascist violence, as well as representations of life in *confinamento* itself. However, if we are to accept *confinamento* as indispensable preparatory work for the Resistance, then we must examine the work produced within that space, as well, including the work that does not treat the day-to-day experience of internal exile. In this section, then, I examine a text produced by a *confinato* during his time in internal exile: Carlo Rosselli's *Socialismo liberale*. Although the contents of this work may not contain a discussion of *confinamento*, the book in itself constitutes an example of the shapes the resistance of the *confinati* could take. I examine the recognition of the need to develop an international antifascist politics—a politics that would go beyond combatting Mussolini's fascist regime alone. Indeed, Luigi Longo writes that in 1935 “Il problema della Resistenza si chiariva: per trionfare, il fronte antifascista avrebbe dovuto essere un fronte di *masse*, di *popoli* e di *Stati*.”³⁴⁵ Thus, in examining the work of Carlo Rosselli, I also consider the importance of combatting fascism on a transnational scale, evident through Rosselli's speech *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, delivered in Barcelona while he was a volunteer in the Spanish Civil War. We may trace, of course, the ways in which these texts reveal the influence of internal exile on the themes espoused within them, although this only constitutes a portion of my analysis. Instead, I seek to demonstrate the ways in which these texts

³⁴⁵ Luigi Longo, *Un popolo alla macchia* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1965), 24.

envisage the future in their theorization of and the partaking in the (re)construction of an antifascist Italy and Europe.

Carlo Rosselli's *Socialismo liberale* was written between 1928 and 1929 while he was exiled to the island of Lipari (he first spent time in prison, and then in *confino* on the island of Ustica) for having aided in the escape of socialist leader Filippo Turati to Corsica. The manuscript was later smuggled off the island by his wife, Marion Cave Rosselli. His life on the island was quiet and characterized by his studies, as he notes in *Fuga in quattro tempi*: "Ho molti amici, vivo discretamente, leggo, di nascosto scrivo."³⁴⁶ While *Socialismo liberale* is theoretical in its scope and does not examine Rosselli's experience in exile, it would be a mistake to *not* consider the extraordinary setting and circumstances in which the book was written. As Rosselli himself notes in the preface to the work:

Esso è stato scritto nel piú gran segreto, pochi mesi prima della mia evasione da Lipari, l'isola dove ero stato confinato dal fascismo. L'opera risente fatalmente dello stato di particolare tensione in cui fu elaborata. Tutte le astuzie furono adottate per sottrarla alle frequenti perquisizioni. (Rimase a lungo nascosta in un vecchio pianoforte).³⁴⁷

Rosselli's work could be influenced by none other than the politics of exile that characterized his experience on the island of Lipari. It is, furthermore, a reaction to fascist repression and a text that, in the words of Nadia Urbinati, serves as "a key to understanding the reasons for fascism's defeat of the democratic and socialist movement and for its pointing the way to a possible rebirth."³⁴⁸ Thus, in the section that follows, I

³⁴⁶ Carlo Rosselli, "Fuga in quattro tempi," 38.

³⁴⁷ Carlo Rosselli, *Socialismo liberale* (Rome: Edizioni U, 1945), 5.

³⁴⁸ Nadia Urbinati, "Introduction: Another Socialism." *Liberal Socialism*, edited by Nadia Urbinati (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), xxxiv.

analyze Rosselli's *Socialismo liberale* (though I limit my considerations to an analysis of the final three chapters of the book—"Socialismo liberale," "Il socialismo italiano e la lotta per la libertà," and "Per un socialismo nuovo"—which I believe are those most relevant for this project) with an eye toward the (re)constructive politics outlined in the text.

At first glance, Rosselli's elaboration on the idea of liberal socialism may seem paradoxical; indeed, the author himself recognizes the contradictory nature of the position, while also arguing that the two political philosophies are approaching a convergence:

Il liberalismo si è familiarizzato col problema sociale. Non sembra più che lo si debba per forza collegare ai principi dell'economia classica della scuola di Manchester. Sia pure con difficoltà, il socialismo si sbarazza decisamente delle sue mire utopistiche. Una nuova sensibilità per i problemi di libertà e di autonomia lo pervade tutto.³⁴⁹

Rosselli's insistence on the compatibilities of the two positions drew criticism from all political camps, earning him the label of antifascist heretic.³⁵⁰ For Rosselli, however, the two terms need not be irreconcilable: "Si tratta semplicemente di ricondurre ai suoi principi e alle sue origini teoriche e psicologiche il movimento socialista. Si vuol semplicemente dimostrare come il socialismo, in ultima analisi, sia la filosofia della libertà."³⁵¹ In a totalitarian environment in which all political parties had been dissolved (aside from the PNF), freedom of speech, thought, and press were practically nonexistent, and political opponents were condemned to prison or internal exile (or even assassinated), Rosselli's understanding of socialism and the steps the movement needed to take could find its locus in the concept of unabated liberty. Ironically, just as *confino*

³⁴⁹ Carlo Rosselli, *Socialismo liberale*, 6.

³⁵⁰ Pugliese, *Carlo Rosselli*, 9. In this same volume, see pages 112-116 for reactions (both positive and negative) to the publication of *Socialismo liberale*.

³⁵¹ Rosselli, *Socialismo liberale*, 88.

would pave the path for resistance in fascist Italy, so too does fascist violence pave the way for liberty: “Con il manganello e le manette, con le sue raffinate persecuzioni, Mussolini sta per creare a dozzine di migliaia gli italiani moderni, i volontari della libertà. La logica formidabile degli strumenti di repressione furibonda di cui è attualmente prigioniero sta per divenire la nostra migliore alleata.”³⁵² Mussolini is constructing modern Italians because there is no Italian who is not, in one way or another, untouched by the incessant repression of the regime and the discipline it imposes, thus creating the conditions in which each Italian yearns for the same thing: liberty. Liberty, in turn, is not given, but is something, instead, that is fought for: “Il liberalismo concepisce la libertà non come un dato naturale, ma come uno sviluppo. Gli uomini non nascono liberi, lo diventano. E si conservano liberi mantenendo attiva e vigilante la coscienza della loro autonomia ed esercitando costantemente questa libertà.”³⁵³ If Rosselli had at one point achieved freedom, it had been stripped away through the institution of *confino*; this passage, however, reveals Rosselli’s determination to, like many other *confinati*, subvert the fascist politics of exile to construct his own set of politics and exercise freedom through intellectual creativity. What becomes clear, however, when read alongside Rosselli’s other political reflections, is that reading or writing theory itself is not sufficient in obtaining freedom. Reflecting on his time spent in Lipari, Rosselli writes: “Lipari va bene per pensionati politici, non per uomini che intendono battersi, lavorare. Abbiamo sete di nuovi reati, sete d’azione. Non siamo delinquenti occasionali. Tre anni di inattività sono un omaggio già enorme al fascismo. Bisogna far punto e da capo.”³⁵⁴ It

³⁵² Carlo Rosselli, *Socialismo liberale*, 112.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 89.

³⁵⁴ Carlo Rosselli, “Fuga in quattro tempi,” 41.

is curious that, given the drafting of *Socialismo liberale* while in exile, Rosselli refers to his time on Lipari as “three years of inactivity.” As I have argued throughout this dissertation, many *confinati* succeeded in combatting the restrictions and immobility imposed by exile, and Rosselli is an excellent example of this resistance. Thus, while writing may have been a way for Rosselli to exercise his liberty and self-determination, it was certainly not his ultimate goal: “sono già stufo, orrendamente stufo di questa vita da pollaio, di questa falsa apparenza di libertà.”³⁵⁵ It would seem that, for Rosselli, theory is nothing without praxis, although there need not be a strict, uncompromising relationship between the two, lest it prevent the emergence of a practical political program:

il movimento politico socialista deve adottare, per tutto ciò che concerne la sua direzione filosofica e culturale, un largo e intelligente principio di tolleranza. Se ogni individuo isolato considera come comprensibile, anzi necessario, fare ogni sforzo per coordinare la teoria e la pratica, il pensiero e l’azione, la stessa regola applicata al movimento nel suo insieme è un grave errore. Guai a chi riconduce a un dato principio filosofico un movimento dovuto all’evoluzione dei secoli e a una ineluttabile molteplicità di cause. Guai a chi vuol fissare, come è stato fatto un tempo, una «filosofia ufficiale» del socialismo. Ciò porta a far nascere tanti differenti socialismi quante sono le tendenze, o – ipotesi anche più plausibile – ad arrestare, paralizzare, isolare il movimento.³⁵⁶

Rosselli’s vision for socialism is one that privileges action and the free will of man, in contrast with Marxist determinism. Resistance to passivity, the need to combat the repression of fascism, guides Rosselli’s politics. Indeed, in the chapter titled “Il socialismo italiano e la lotta per la libertà,” the question of action is at the forefront. Rosselli claims that Italians are morally lazy—an attitude that allowed for the rise of fascism in Italy. He writes,

Abituati a ragionare per mezzo di intermediari sui grandi problemi della coscienza – autentica abdicazione dello spirito – è naturale che si rassegnino facilmente a

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 38.

³⁵⁶ Carlo Rosselli, *Socialismo liberale*, 130.

abbandonare la parte che loro spetta nei grandi problemi della vita politica. L'intervento del «deus ex machina», del Duce, del domatore – si chiami esso Papa, Re o Mussolini – soddisfa spesso in loro a una necessità psicologica. Considerato da questo punto di vista, il governo di Mussolini è tutt'altro che rivoluzionario. Si riallaccia alla tradizione e continua sulla via del minimo sforzo.

Contro ogni apparenza, il fascismo è il risultato più passivo della storia d'Italia, un gigantesco ritorno sui secoli passati, abietto fenomeno di adattamento e di rinuncia. Mussolini ha trionfato grazie a una diserzione quasi universale, attraverso un lungo tessuto di sapienti compromessi. Appena qualche minoranza di proletari e di intellettuali ha avuto il coraggio di affrontarlo, da principio, con radicale intransigenza.³⁵⁷

In Rosselli's view, if Italy is to overcome fascism, then its population must take on an *active* role in the political life of the country, and the proletariat must have the courage to stand up to fascism and other repressive manifestations. Let us consider, for example, the following statement:

Come tutti gli strumenti perfezionati, il metodo liberale implica un alto grado di civiltà. Si può anzi dire che esso è il prodotto della civiltà. Basta il sabotaggio di una sola delle parti in lizza per impedire il buon funzionamento del metodo. Ma risulta da questo fatto stesso che la violenza impiegata dagli altri partiti per richiamare all'ordine la personalità recalcitrante sarebbe pienamente legittima. La violenza a cui dovrebbe ricorrere il proletario, se si vedesse attaccato da forze reazionarie all'indomani di una grande vittoria elettorale che gli aprisse le vie del potere, sarebbe una violenza sacrosanta e essenzialmente liberale. Il liberalismo non esclude la violenza; ma la trasforma accordandole la sanzione della morale e del diritto.³⁵⁸

For Rosselli, democracy and the liberal method must be defended at all costs. To fail to do so would be to repeat the mistakes of the past, among which we may count, for example, the peace pact signed between socialists and fascists in 1921, and the strict ideological constraints imposed by the Partito Comunista d'Italia (PCd'I) and the PSI, which prevented its members from engaging in militant antifascist resistance alongside

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 110-11.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 100.

the *Arditi del Popolo*.³⁵⁹ Rosselli himself was, of course, one of the figures who had the courage to confront the regime, a move which landed him on the island of Lipari and condemned him to what was intended to be a sedentary and unproductive existence. The book, then, is both an act of resistance and a call to action for the Italian population. It is, furthermore, as Aldo Garosci notes, a preface to his future political endeavors and acts of resistance: “Una semplice lettura di *Socialismo liberale* basterebbe da sola – se non ci fossero ricordi di ogni sorta – a attestare la volontà di Rosselli di non finire a Lipari.”³⁶⁰ Indeed, Rosselli would fulfill this desire on July 27, 1929 when he escaped from the island alongside fellow *confinati* Francesco Fausto Nitti and Emilio Lussu.³⁶¹ While *confinamento* may have been a school of antifascism—even for Rosselli—his escape from Lipari provided him with the opportunity to shift his work from theory to practice: “Siamo tutti protesi verso l’avvenire. Vogliamo lavorare, combattere, riprendere il nostro posto. Un solo pensiero ci guiderà nella terra ospitale: fare di questa libertà personale faticosamente [sic] conquistata uno strumento per la riconquista della libertà di tutto un popolo.”³⁶² This escape will, of course, allow Rosselli to rejoin the political community, albeit from exile in Paris, which would subsequently lead to the founding of *Giustizia e Libertà*, an organization based on the political program outlined in Rosselli’s *Socialismo liberale*, which, to quote Stanislao Pugliese, “insisted on a constructive, affirmative anti-

³⁵⁹ See Behan, 2.

³⁶⁰ Aldo Garosci, *La vita di Carlo Rosselli*, volume 1 (Rome: Edizioni U, 1945), 159.

³⁶¹ Rosselli’s account of the escape is detailed in *Fuga in quattro tempi*, although a complete analysis of that text is beyond the scope of this project. See Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, 114-118.

³⁶² Carlo Rosselli, “Fuga in quattro tempi,” 54.

fascism.”³⁶³ Furthermore, Rosselli’s escape would also lead to his participation in the international brigades in the Spanish Civil War.

If we are to understand the full historical and political impact of *confinò* and the scope of the *confinati*’s commitment to international antifascism, we must consider their participation in the Spanish Civil War as volunteers. Antonio Moscato writes, “La partecipazione alla guerra di Spagna è stata determinante per la formazione politica e militare di una parte significativa del gruppo dirigente comunista italiano.”³⁶⁴

Participation in the Spanish Civil War was not only formative for the communists, but also for many other Italian volunteers including socialists and anarchists. I believe it is useful, however, to examine not only the impact the war would have on the politics of those who participated in it, but also their experiences prior to the war that influenced their decision to participate in it. In this way, we may trace a thread of antifascist resistance that finds its roots in the formative experience of *confinò*. Thus, if *confinò* was a school of antifascism, we must consider its relevance as an important experience for the political education of those who would go on to fight in the Spanish Civil War following their time spent in internal exile. Among the Italian volunteers, for example, were the aforementioned *confinati* Carlo Rosselli, Francesco Fausto Nitti and Emilio Lussu. In connecting *confinò* to participation in the Spanish Civil War, I mean to reassert the formative experience of *confinò* in the antifascist struggle. It is, after all, on the island of Lipari that Carlo Rosselli wrote *Socialismo liberale*, which laid out his own program for

³⁶³ Stanislao Pugliese, “In Defense of Liberal Socialism: Carlo Rosselli’s Legacy,” *Italian Americana* 25.1 (Winter 2007): 28.

³⁶⁴ Antonio Moscato, “Il PCI e la guerra di Spagna,” *Gli intellettuali e la guerra di Spagna (Atti del convegno di Lecce, 15-16 dicembre 1986)*, edited by Leonardo La Puma and Teodosio Vertone (Lecce: Milella Editore, 1988), 31.

Giustizia e Libertà, whose members populated the *Colonna Italiana*: the group of Italian volunteers fighting in Spain. Rosselli's writing in *confino* would prove not to be solely a passive intellectual exercise, but an active form of resistance when considering the very practical influence of his politics. In the section that follows, I will consider Rosselli's participation in the Spanish Civil War and, specifically, his radio speech titled *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia*, delivered from Barcelona on November 13, 1936 and addressed to his fellow Italians.

In this speech, Rosselli underlines the importance of international solidarity in the fight against fascism and connects the struggle of the Spaniards fighting against Francisco Franco to that of the Italians fighting against Mussolini's regime: "In tutti i reparti si trovano volontari italiani, uomini che, avendo perduto la libertà nella propria terra, cominciano col riconquistarla in Ispagna, fucile alla mano."³⁶⁵ Just as in *Socialismo liberale*, liberty is the central concept through which Rosselli frames his politics in this speech. For Rosselli, liberty cannot be obtained if not through solidarity with those fighting fascism across Europe. Liberty gained abroad, then, translates to liberty at home. Thus, the struggle in Spain is framed as an example from which Italians may draw inspiration for their own struggle. Rosselli states,

Sappiamo che le dittature passano e che i popoli restano. La Spagna ce ne fornisce la palpitante riprova. Nessuno parla più di de Rivera. Nessuna parlerà più domani di Mussolini. È come nel Risorgimento, nell'epoca più buia, quando quasi nessuno osava sperare, dall'estero vennero l'esempio e l'incitamento, così oggi noi siamo convinti che da questo sforzo modesto, ma virile, dei volontari italiani, troverà alimento domani una possente volontà di riscatto.

È con questa speranza segreta che siamo

³⁶⁵ Carlo Rosselli, "Discorso pronunciato alla radio di Barcellona," in *Scritti politici e autobiografici*, 166.

accorsi in Ispagna. Oggi qui, domani in Italia.³⁶⁶

For Rosselli, the Spanish Civil War was to serve, just as other foreign struggles in the past, as inspiration for Italians at home. The war presented an opportunity to, as Stanislaw Pugliese suggests, “combat fascism on equal terms, on the field of battle, with the only element understood by fascism—force.”³⁶⁷ Rosselli’s speech is, quite literally, then, a call to arms for the Italians, one that may have led to the eventual assassination of Rosselli.³⁶⁸

Rosselli’s language furthermore paints the struggle in Spain as not only one that will burn down fascism, but also one that will begin to reconstruct from its ashes:

Sull’altra sponda del Mediterraneo un mondo nuovo sta nascendo. È la riscossa antifascista che si inizia in occidente. Dalla Spagna guadagnerà l’Europa. Arriverà innanzi tutto in Italia, così vicina alla Spagna per lingua, tradizioni, clima, costumi e tiranni. Arriverà perché la storia non si ferma, il progresso continua, le dittature sono delle parentesi nella vita dei popoli, quasi una sferza per imporre loro, dopo un periodo d’inerzia e di abbandono, di riprendere in mano il loro destino.³⁶⁹

Here, Rosselli emphasizes themes of rebirth and reconstruction, rather than focusing on the defeat of fascism itself. Indeed, a new world is being born alongside the revival of antifascism. For Rosselli, the fall of fascism is inevitable, as dictatorships are only parentheses, and history will follow its natural course (through active resistance, of course). The Spanish Civil War will furthermore serve as an inspiration for Italians, not only because they too were fighting a brutal dictator, but because Rosselli identifies a spiritual connection between the two countries. In this speech, then, I argue that Rosselli anticipates the discussion and push for a united Europe, not because it is something that he explicitly supports, but because he identifies that the problem of fascism is not one

³⁶⁶Ibid., 168.

³⁶⁷ Pugliese, *Carlo Rosselli*, 200.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 208.

³⁶⁹ Carlo Rosselli, “Discorso pronunciato alla radio di Barcellona,” 170.

that will be confined to the individual nation states of Europe, but one that is destined to spread across the entire continent. Thus, just as the Spanish Civil War serves as a call to action for the Italians in Rosselli's speech, so too will it serve as a call to action across all of Europe.

The revival of antifascism in Spain, Italy, and Europe is not only an event that will close the parenthesis on a period of brutal, fascist dictatorships, but one that will inaugurate a new phase in history. For Rosselli, the Spanish Civil War and the movements that it will inspire serves, above all, as an example of a successful proletarian revolution: "Un ordine nuovo è nato, basato sulla libertà e la giustizia sociale. Nelle officine non comanda più il padrone, ma la collettività, attraverso consigli di fabbrica e sindacati."³⁷⁰ It is inspiration for the socialist revolution that never came to be in Italy, and an example of the value of a united front: "Non un solo partito che, pretendendosi infallibile, sequestra la rivoluzione su un programma concreto e realista: anarchici, comunisti, socialisti, repubblicani collaborano alla direzione della cosa pubblica, al fronte, nella vita sociale. Quale insegnamento per noi italiani!"³⁷¹ Rosselli's affirmation here recalls the various political camps that existed among the the *confinati*, but here the emphasis is on the value of these factions uniting together to achieve a common goal. It would seem, then, that—much like the experience of exile in *confino*—the experience of the Italian volunteers in the Spanish Civil War would prove to also serve as a school of antifascism, one in which the participants learned that revolution is a collective, international, and cross-party endeavor without which fascism could never be defeated.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 169.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 169-170.

Indeed, some of those who fought in the Spanish Civil War would also find themselves in *confino* following the conflict, bringing along another set of antifascist politics with them in exile. Theory and practice—education and resistance—come full circle. Ghini and Dal Pont write:

Il primo incontro tangibile con la guerra di Spagna i confinati politici di Ventotene l'ebbero con l'arrivo di quattro antifranchisti spagnoli di Maiorca, i quali, dopo la conquista dell'isola da parte dei falangisti, erano rimasti lungamente nascosti per sottrarsi alla cattura; nel tentativo di fuggire in barca, vennero intercettati da una nave mercantile italiana e portati in Italia. Il governo italiano, per motivi ignoti e imperscrutabili, anziché consegnarli alle autorità franchiste, decise di spedirli nella colonia di confinati politici più qualificata e meglio ordinata. Questi profughi portarono, così, informazioni di prima mano sulle vicende della guerra civile ed ebbero il conforto di trovarsi fra amici e compagni di lotta. I combattenti italiani in Spagna entrarono nella vita del confino più tardi, nel corso della guerra mondiale. Fu un'entrata massiccia, soprattutto per la colonia di Ventotene, ed ebbe un grande rilievo politico e morale.³⁷²

Thus, we witness a continuity between the events and the politics of the Spanish Civil War and the politics of exile in *confino*. The island of Ventotene, for example, comes to represent the dawning of an international, antifascist movement where those who had confronted fascism in various periods and contexts could come together to refine their politics.

5.2 (Re)constructing Europe: The *Manifesto di Ventotene*

Rosselli's *Oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia* is just one of the theoretical texts that we may examine in our consideration of international antifascism. International antifascism is also at the core of Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi's famous political treatise, the *Manifesto di Ventotene*, specifically with regard to its importance for a united Europe. This text would lay the groundwork for the actions taken in the reconstruction of

³⁷² Ghini and Dal Pont, 136-137.

Italy and Europe after World War II, which could be (re)formed in response to the violent fascist movements that ravaged the continent. In 1941, while interned on the island of Ventotene, the *confinati* Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi (later assisted by Eugenio Colorni and Ursula Hirschmann) began writing their political treatise advocating for a united Europe, originally titled *Per un'Europa libera e unita. Progetto d'un Manifesto*, which would later come to be known simply as the *Manifesto di Ventotene*. The *Manifesto* analyzes the problem of maintaining sovereign nation states in Europe and outlines, instead, a program for the establishment of a federation of European states. Although many of the texts that I have considered in this dissertation speak to the experience of *confinamento*, I believe that the *Manifesto*, like *Socialismo liberale*, must be included alongside these works, as it is a tangible product of that experience, an example of the agency expressed in studying and political organizing in *confinamento*. In the section that follows, I will examine European federalism, as it is theorized in the *Manifesto*, and argue that it finds its roots in the concept of a constructive international antifascism, while furthermore considering the reactions of the other *confinati* on the island of Ventotene to the *Manifesto*.

When Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi, and Eugenio Colorni met during their Ventotene *confinamento*, their conversations proved to be a catalyst for the development of their politics. In *Come ho tentato di diventare saggio. Io Ulisse*, Altiero Spinelli writes,

Le conversazioni con Rossi mi scossero dal mio stato quasi sognante, facendomi sentire che non potevo più continuare a meditare su Mosé, Solone, Gesù, San Paolo, Marx, ma che dovevo decidere qui ed ora, alla evidente vigilia del ritorno alla vita attiva, quali fossero i nostri ideali di civiltà e prepararmi ad essere loro fedele, poiché dopo la vittoria contro Hitler non sarebbe stato facile fare di essi i punti di riferimento

fermi per costruire la società del dopoguerra.³⁷³

Spinelli's comment confirms Jacometti's assertion that *confino* was a "scuola di antifascismo," in that the *confinati* studied and developed their ideas through conversations and debates with each other, and the *Manifesto* is just one result of their interactions. Spinelli's comments furthermore demonstrate the way in which *confino* transformed a passive action into active resistance; his conversations with Rossi encouraged him to abandon passive philosophical meditation in favor of active preparation that would serve him in the reconstruction of society after the war. As Spinelli states, "Non si trattava di un invito a sognare, ma di un invito ad operare."³⁷⁴ The authors of the *Manifesto* circulated the first draft around the island, but, as Beatrice Semzaconi notes, it received very little support, with many *confinati* refusing to adhere to its principles.³⁷⁵ The lack of support from other *confinati* is significant in that it demonstrates the wide range of ideas regarding not only the best way to combat fascism, but also regarding the ideal model for the society to be constructed after the war, and the role Italy would play on an international scale. For the *confinati*, then, the war and Mussolini were only temporary, and their duty was to theorize what type of society would arise after the fall of fascism and the end of the war. In this way, the reconstruction of the Italian and European community finds its roots in these debates and conversations on the island of Ventotene.

³⁷³ Altiero Spinelli, *Come ho tentato di diventare saggio. Io, Ulisse*. Bologna: il Mulino, 1984, 304. Italics mine.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 312.

³⁷⁵ Beatrice Semzaconi, "Altiero Spinelli e il Manifesto di Ventotene," *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai, Studia Europaea*, XLIV 1-2 (1999): 26.

For the authors of the *Manifesto*, the reconstruction of society would have to be rooted in a staunch antifascism. We see this idea not only in the content of the *Manifesto* itself, but also in the way that it was disseminated. Spinelli writes,

Nel tetro inverno '40-'41, quando quasi tutta L'Europa continentale era stata soggiogata da Hitler, l'Italia di Mussolini ansimava al suo seguito, l'URSS stava digerendo il bottino che era riuscita ad afferrare, gli Stati Uniti erano ancora neutrali e l'Inghilterra sola resisteva, trasfigurandosi agli occhi di tutti i democratici d'Europa in loro patria ideale, proposi ad Ernesto Rossi di scrivere insieme un «manifesto per un'Europa libera ed unita», e di immetterlo nei canali della clandestinità antifascista sul continente.³⁷⁶

In disseminating the *Manifesto* among the antifascist movement on the mainland, it would seem that Spinelli and the other authors were trying to provide direction to the Resistance effort while creating a roadmap for the future of Italy and the continent. The program laid out in the *Manifesto* is, as Beatrice Semzaconi notes, “una vera rivoluzione politica.”³⁷⁷ It is a revolution in that, like all other revolutions, it is born out of crisis: “La crisi della civiltà moderna,” which the authors use as the title for the first chapter. The crisis of modern civilization—the slip into totalitarianism and the proliferation of world wars—is to be found in the organization of sovereign nation states. According to the authors,

La sovranità assoluta degli stati nazionali ha portato alla volontà di dominio di ciascuno di essi, poiché ciascuno si sente minacciato dalla potenza degli altri e considera suo «spazio vitale» territori sempre più vasti, che gli permettano di muoversi liberamente e di assicurarsi i mezzi di esistenza, senza dipendere da alcuno. Questa volontà di dominio non potrebbe acquetarsi che nella egemonia dello stato più forte su tutti gli altri asserviti.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁶ Altiero Spinelli, *Come ho tentato di diventare saggio*, 311.

³⁷⁷ Semzaconi, 24.

³⁷⁸ Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi, “Per un'Europa libera e unita. Progetto d'un Manifesto,” *Eurostudium 3w* (January-March, 2011): 165.

Here, we find the crux of the authors' argument; as long as independent nation states continue to exist, one can expect the development of totalitarian societies. This development will be accompanied by an unrelenting imperialism, which may furthermore be connected to the biopolitical objectives of the state: "le madri vengono considerate come fattrici di soldati, ed in conseguenza premiate con gli stessi criteri con i quali alle mostre si premiano le bestie prolifiche."³⁷⁹ Every aspect of life—down to reproduction—serves to strengthen the military might of the nation and its aim to dominate others. Like Rosselli, Spinelli and Rossi believe that the fate of a single nation is tied to liberty in all other nations: "Basta che una nazione faccia un passo in avanti verso un più accentuato totalitarismo, perché sia seguita dalle altre trascinate nello stesso solco dalla volontà di sopravvivere."³⁸⁰ Thus, from the beginning of the *Manifesto*, we can identify in the authors' argument a will to not simply reconstruct the individual nation states, but to construct something entirely new: a united European federation. That is, a post-war (re)construction must include a set of politics that evolves beyond the conditions that were responsible for bringing about an age of crisis in the first place, lest the past be repeated.

For the authors of the *Manifesto*, a post-war politics must also reject the logic of racism:

Quantunque nessuno sappia che cosa sia una razza, e le più elementari nozioni storiche ne facciano risultare l'assurdità, si esige dai fisiologi di credere, dimostrare e convincere che si appartiene ad una razza eletta, solo perché l'imperialismo ha bisogno di questo mito per esaltare nelle masse l'odio e l'orgoglio.³⁸¹

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 167. It is odd that, later in the *Manifesto*, the authors mention a "sistemazione europea nei possedimenti coloniali" (174), a phrase and action which seem to undermine the elimination of a racist politics, but this is beyond the scope of my project.

Spinelli and Rossi underline an important notion regarding race: nobody is able to easily define the concept of “race,” because it is one that has been fluid throughout history, subject to the whims and motivations of those who seek to define it in biological, cultural, or other terms. As we saw in Chapter 3, fascist racism is justified not only to fulfill its reproductive aims, but also to make Italians and to legitimize the regime’s own politics of exile. If one does away with the preoccupation with race, one removes a principal motivation for organizing society into an “us” versus “them” dichotomy. The authors of the *Manifesto* do not doubt that Europe’s totalitarian regimes will collapse, and it is the reaction to the crisis of that political moment that will determine the fate of the continent:

La caduta dei regimi totalitari significherà sentimentalmente per interi popoli l’avvento della «libertà»; sarà scomparso ogni freno, ed automaticamente regneranno amplissime libertà di parola e di associazione. Sarà il trionfo delle tendenze democratiche. Esse hanno innumerevoli sfumature, che vanno da un liberalismo molto conservatore fino al socialismo e all’anarchia.³⁸²

However, as Rosselli reminds us in *Socialismo liberale*, liberty is an ideal for which man must constantly fight and one that he must continually exercise. The authors are careful to point out, for example, that a successful revolution must not revert to reactionary tendencies. Instead,

Un vero movimento rivoluzionario dovrà sorgere da coloro che han saputo criticare le vecchie impostazioni politiche; dovrà saper collaborare con le forze democratiche, con quelle comuniste, e in genere con quanti cooperino alla disgregazione del totalitarismo; ma senza lasciarsi irretire dalla prassi politica di nessuna di esse.³⁸³

³⁸² Ibid., 170.

³⁸³ Ibid., 173.

If, however, the institutions in place prior to the rise of fascism in Europe allowed for the development of those same totalitarian states, the post-war revolution must take measures to ensure that the same political configurations are not reinstated. Along this line of thinking, then, we find the internationalist tendencies of the authors of the *Manifesto*, which find their logical conclusion in the abolition of the sovereign nation states of Europe.³⁸⁴ Indeed, the authors maintain that “Un’Europa libera e unita è premessa necessaria del potenziamento della civiltà moderna, di cui l’era totalitaria rappresenta un arresto.”³⁸⁵ Thus, without the abolition of individual nation states, Europe could once again slide back into a period of totalitarianism and war.

While the authors of the *Manifesto* do not frame their argument as an act of antifascist resistance, the theorization of the abolition of individual European nation states and the constitution of a free and united Europe can be nothing other than an expression of antifascism in its most simple form. If fascism is predicated on extreme nationalism, including jingoism, and the privileging of a hierarchy of race, with regard to both its biological and its cultural definition, then antifascism must necessarily reject that very same nationalism in favor of international solidarity. The *Manifesto*, too, is not only a call to action for Italians, but also for all of those who will play an important role in the reconstruction of Europe following the end of World War II.

5.3 (Re)construction from Destruction: The Collapse of the Fascist Regime

If the *Manifesto di Ventotene* and *Socialismo liberale* serve as the theoretical examples of an antifascist Italy to come after the fall of Mussolini’s regime, the memoirs

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 174.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 176.

of former *confinati* provide a unique insight into the immediate (re)construction that began in Italy after the collapse of fascism. I now return to witness testimonies in considering the reaction of the *confinati* to the collapse of Italy's fascist regime on the island of Ventotene and argue that the construction of a post-fascist Italy was inaugurated, first and foremost, in this colony. The collapse of the fascist regime presented a unique opportunity for the *confinati* to begin the (re)construction of the new Italy and would carve the way for resistance in the rest of Italy. In his memoir, Alberto Jacometti outlines the way in which the *confinati* immediately began the work of (re)construction on the island of Ventotene when Mussolini fell. The news of Mussolini's fall on July 25, 1943 reached the island the next day, on July 26. After hearing confirmation of the collapse of the regime and Mussolini's arrest through a radio transmission, Llazar Fundo—an Albanian communist interned on Ventotene—yelled, “Viva l'Italia libera!”³⁸⁶ Shortly after this, a group of *confinati* sprang into action; with the fall of the regime, it was time for the *confinati* to put what they had learned into practice: “Dieci minuti dopo una Commissione è formata. Mezz'ora dopo la Commissione è riunita e delibera.”³⁸⁷ The committee, which was made up of *confinati* from various political tendencies,³⁸⁸ drafted a list of demands to be immediately implemented on the island:

La Commissione domanda:

«Il proprio riconoscimento;
di inviare un telegramma al Capo del Governo;

³⁸⁶ Jacometti, 129.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Corvisieri notes that Sandro Pertini approached Francesco Fancello, Mauro Scoccimarro, Altiero Spinelli, Pietro Secchia, Giovanni Domaschi, Antonio Babich, Antonio Francovich, and Llazar Fundo to form the commission (281).

di rimuovere dagli uffici e dal paese tutti gli emblemi fascisti, i fasci, i busti, i quadri, i distintivi, le camicie nere e via discorrendo;
 di togliere i pedinamenti;
 che milizia e confinati non abbiano più alcun contatto;
 di togliere dalla circolazione alcuni militi che verranno nominativamente designati;
 di informare i tedeschi che qualsiasi gesto di provocazione sarà rilevato dai confinati;
 se tale gesto fosse diretto contro la popolazione, i confinati, come un solo uomo, si metterebbero a fianco della popolazione;
 a tali condizioni la Commissione si impegna a mantenere l'ordine fra i confinati».

Tutte le condizioni vengono accettate.³⁸⁹

In the absence of direction on the island, then, the *confinati* succeeded in establishing their own sort of “government,”³⁹⁰ which would prepare them for their role in reconstructing a free Italy. Moreover, this ad hoc government actively subverted the repressive politics of exile imposed on the island, dismantling the extensive surveillance practices that existed on Ventotene, such as tailing, and therefore reclaimed control over their own bodies through freedom of movement. Indeed, in forming a commission and making the above demands, the *confinati* asserted their legitimacy on the island. Despite the discrepancies among the politics of the various *confinati*, the fall of fascism presents the *confinati* with the opportunity to act as a single, cohesive unit, one that is furthermore invested in the welfare of the population in this uncertain, yet decisive moment in Italian history.

The weight of responsibility that would fall upon the shoulders of the *confinati* is immediately implicated following the fall of fascism, and it is a responsibility of which the *confinati* are conscious. Sandro Pertini, for example, recalls:

Un confinato gridò: "Viva l'Italia libera!" Applaudimmo e ritornammo verso i cameroni. Strano quello che subentrò in noi: erano vent'anni - in esilio, in carcere, al

³⁸⁹ Jacometti, *Ventotene* 129-130.

³⁹⁰ See Poerio, 164. See also Alessandro Coletti, *Il governo di Ventotene: stalinismo e lotta politica tra i dirigenti del PCI al confino* (Milan: La Pietra, 1978).

confino - che attendevamo la caduta del fascismo, e adesso l'accoglievamo senza alcuna manifestazione di esultanza. Ma ciascuno pensava alla grande responsabilità che sarebbe pesata sulla nuova classe dirigente, su di noi; pensava all'eredità fallimentare lasciata dal fascismo ed intuiva che le lotte più dure e difficili ci attendevano, dopo l'inattività forzata cui per lunghi anni eravamo stati costretti.³⁹¹

After years in exile, the moment had come for the *confinati* to turn their training into action. As Pertini notes, there was no time for celebration, since the *confinati* were preoccupied with the challenge that faced them: reconstructing a country that had been destroyed under twenty years of brutal, autocratic rule. It is in this very moment that the *confinati* move from the theorization of power to the direct seizure of it. In Pertini's letter to Pietro Badoglio—Prime Minister of Italy following the removal of Mussolini from power—he writes, “Confinati et internati isola Ventotene [...] reclamano immediata liberazione condannati e relegati politici come automatica conseguenza della soppressione del Regime Fascista.”³⁹² The liberation of the *confinati* is not something that is requested, but demanded, instead, which represents a true upheaval of the power dynamics on the island. In the meantime, the *confinati* work to seize power in other ways on the island, as well. Jacometti, for example, writes that “I confinati vanno alla ricerca dei fasci, degli stemmi, delle iscrizioni da rimuovere o da cancellare.”³⁹³ Pier Vittorio Buffa sheds more light on this same event:

Pertini entra in azione. Con un gruppetto di giovani *confinati* scardina il fascio che era sul portale del Castello, poi cerca gli altri simboli del regime in giro per il paese e li distrugge. I ritratti di Mussolini spariscono dai muri degli uffici. I militi fascisti devono deporre le armi, le consegnano tutte ai carabinieri.³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ Sandro Pertini, *Sei condanne, due evasioni*, edited by Vico Faggi (Milan: Mondadori, 1970), 332.

³⁹² Sandro Pertini, *Dal confino alla Resistenza. Lettere: 1935-1945*, edited by Stefano Caretti (Manduria: Piero Lacaita Editore, 2007), 121.

³⁹³ Jacometti, 131.

³⁹⁴ Pier Vittorio Buffa, *Non volevo morire così: Santo Stefano e Ventotene. Storie di ergastolo e di confino* (Rome: Nutrimenti, 2017), 188.

For the *confinati*, then, true reconstruction and healing begins not only with the collapse of the Fascist government, but also with the erasure of its legacy through the eradication of its symbols, for reconstruction can only begin with the destruction of the remnants of fascism.³⁹⁵ Buffa's description of this event reveals both the symbolic and material significance of the actions of the *confinati*: to remove all portraits of Mussolini and to disarm all fascist officials is to assert the agency of the *confinati* and the power they now hold on the island. It is, furthermore, an example of the continual effort to construct an antifascist space. Fascism and its rhetoric, propaganda, and symbols had pervaded Italian society for twenty years, occupying both public and private spaces. The removal of the regime's symbols and the portraits of Mussolini constitutes an official reclamation of these spaces.

The *confinati* would not only construct, demand, and take power in the colonies following the collapse of the regime, but would also be indispensable for the Italian Resistance and in the years to come following the end of the war:

è indubbio il contributo che [i comunisti] [...] seppero portare al di fuori del partito, nella lotta antifascista post-1943 e nella costruzione della Repubblica, quel contributo che Spriano definisce «grande» e che discende inequivocabilmente dal lungo corso universitario svolto nelle prigioni e nelle colonie di confino, che attraversa dieci e anche quindici anni della storia del nostro paese ed è premessa di tutto quanto accadde dopo.³⁹⁶

It is not only the communists who had been in *confino* who would contribute to the resistance and political landscape of Italy after 1943 and following World War II, but,

³⁹⁵ For a recounting outside of Ventotene of the news of Mussolini's collapse, as well as the actions taken in response to this news, see Cesira Fiori, *La confinata* (Milan: La Pietra, 1979), 91-95.

³⁹⁶ Poerio, 164-165.

without a doubt, *ex-confinati* from all political camps. Many of the figures mentioned in this dissertation (Alessandro Pertini, Camilla Ravera, Giorgio Amendola, Altiero Spinelli, to name a few) would go on to have political careers in Italy following World War II and play active roles in the shaping of the policy and political direction of Italy and Europe. Furthermore, those who did not survive and succumbed to the regime's violent politics (directly or indirectly), such as Antonio Gramsci and Carlo Rosselli, would influence political philosophy in both Italy and around the world; Gramsci's ideas, of course, still carry tremendous weight in today's political circles. Thus, subject to the fascist politics of death, the *confinati* succeeded in creating, instead, a politics of life: a politics rooted in creativity and (re)construction, which would forever shape the future of antifascism.

Conclusion and New Directions

In this dissertation, we have seen how Italy's Fascist regime implemented a politics of exile, rooted in violence, surveillance, and the attempt to control both bodies and minds through social and spatial engineering. Over the course of this study, I have analyzed a wide range of texts in order to demonstrate how authors represent their own politics of exile in response to the regime's extraordinary measures. I have ultimately argued for the importance of space, the body, and language for the *confinati* and for those who narrate and represent the *confino* experience. That is not all; I have furthermore tried to briefly reflect on the reasons contemporary authors, directors, and artists continue to return to the topic of *confino*, and what emerged is that we have only begun to write the history of *confino*.

As we have seen, my dissertation is organized in a thematic rather than chronological manner. I had originally intended to separate this study into three sections: "Restriction," "Resistance," and "Reconstruction." I decided, however, to abandon this particular mode of organization, as many of the texts I consider contain elements that could fit into any of the three aforementioned categories. That is, the texts I examine are not black and white—one may discover examples of restriction, resistance, and reconstruction in all of these texts, and thus they resist such a neat categorization. Indeed, in studying *confino* through a set of texts that spans across many decades, it is difficult to insist on either an optimistic reading or a pessimistic reading; while treating many of the same themes, each of these texts do so from a unique standpoint and thus open our eyes to different interpretations and manifestations of restriction, resistance, and reconstruction in the *ventennio* and their implications for the future. The production of

texts—be they memoirs, novels, films, or other media—related to this topic has been quite consistent since the early years of *confino* and continue to be produced today. In one moment, then, these texts may serve a historical and educational function. In another, they serve as a warning: a mirror held up to contemporary society and a blueprint for responding to the perennial threat of fascism.

This study is by no means exhaustive, and there are still many directions in which further research could continue. Although my analysis in Chapter Three considered both the relevance of a film and a graphic novel for *confino*, I think there is still much work to be done in considering the ways in which the visual, in particular, contributes to our understanding of fascist violence, exile, and confinement. How does the spectator-experience at the cinema, in which we are prisoners to the screen (stuck in our individual seats, head fixed, eyes forward and subject to the movement of the camera and the images projected on a screen from a space to which we do not have access), affect our interpretation of and participation in the prison narrative? On the other hand, does the freedom of movement between panels granted by the graphic novel open up the possibility for a more liberatory experience that undercuts the carceral themes represented? Aside from the relationship between the text and the captive experience of the spectator or the reader, there are numerous cinematic adaptations of written *confino* narratives to consider, as well,³⁹⁷ in addition to the way in which these retellings represent a politics of exile in a different manner than the written texts upon which they are based.

³⁹⁷ See Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, specifically their chapter titled “Screening Internal Exile,” for an analysis of some of these films.

It would be interesting, as well, to center research solely on the production of writing in *confino*, how the experience of exile influenced these works, and what these works tell us about creative production while imprisoned (especially as it differs from traditional incarceration in the space of the prison cell). These works, written during an age of repression while simultaneously living the experience of exile, differ from the post-war memoirs, written at a distance after the fact with much more time to reflect on the meaning of the experience. These, in turn, differ from the numerous works created by those who did not experience *confino*, long after the collapse of the fascist regime.

My dissertation relies heavily on a spatial analysis of *confino*, and I believe that space is a particularly useful lens through which to examine a wide range of interdisciplinary topics. Aside from studies that may look solely into the fascist *ventennio*, for example, one can imagine research that focuses solely on the sites of *confino* and their uses prior to and after being utilized to detain *confinati*. According to Anna Foa, for example, “Allo scoppio della guerra, Ustica divenne sede di un campo di concentramento o internamento destinato a «comunisti jugoslavi», come venivano definiti dal ministero degli Interni: cioè, civili jugoslavi, croati e sloveni.”³⁹⁸ Such an analysis may be carried into the present day, where spaces of *confino* like Lampedusa continue to be used for oppressive and detentive measures, specifically pertaining to the immigrants who arrive on Italy’s shores. Indeed, in the early stages of this project I intended to more explicitly connect Fascist national security policy with present-day Italian national security policy. Garofalo, Leake, and Renga write that “The sites of detention and the people imprisoned are public memorials to Fascism’s private

³⁹⁸ Anna Foa, *Andare per i luoghi di confino* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2018), 62.

identity,”³⁹⁹ though it seems that Italy is blind to the fact that it never truly abandoned fascism, but simply gave it a new name. Indeed, the fall of the fascism did not indicate the destruction of the camp. In the present day, the new state of exception is constructed through *another* other—the immigrant.⁴⁰⁰

Roberto Esposito writes that “immigration is [...] commonly presented by the media as a potential biological risk to the host country, according to a model that pathologizes the foreigner.”⁴⁰¹ We see this idea embodied in the immigration policy and the security measures of the late twentieth century and in today’s national security policy. To prevent infection, then, national security adapts to modern technology and proposes new borders; for example, David Forgacs notes that the political border of a nation state may be found up to twelve nautical miles off the coast.⁴⁰² In pushing the borders out into the sea, the goal is to ensure that the threat of infection remains external to Italy, although it will remain so even if it makes landfall. The threat remains external in that the immigrant detention centers, aside from the fact that they are located on the peripheries of urban centers, and it is nearly impossible to gain access to them, are—similarly to spaces of *confinio*—cut off from the political community. This is perhaps best represented in Marco Rovelli’s *Lager Italiani*, a narrative reportage recounting the experiences of immigrants in various CPT, when a member of the police remarks, “Non avete capito che

³⁹⁹ Garofalo, Leake, and Renga, 199.

⁴⁰⁰ See also Poerio: “Il decreto legislativo 25 luglio 1998, n. 286, che legifera in materia di immigrazione clandestina, nel prevedere la reclusione in centri di permanenza temporanea, rinnovabile per un tempo indeterminato in virtù di proroghe, richiama la situazione dei confinati di cui ci occupiamo in questa sede” (28).

⁴⁰¹ Esposito, 4.

⁴⁰² David Forgacs, “Coasts, Blockades, and the Free Movement of People,” *Italian Mobilities*, edited by Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Stephanie Malia-Hom (New York: Routledge, 2016), 183.

qui comanda la polizia? Che questo è un *territorio separato* dall'Italia?"⁴⁰³ This is permissible because the camp is located in the liminal and ambiguous zone of the sovereign sphere. The immigrants who find themselves in the detention centers have already experienced "death" in that they have been marked for deportation and thus find themselves stripped of political life, belonging to no state; however, they simultaneously await a second death, which is only realized after the process of deportation is fully complete. As climate change, globalization and capitalism, political persecution, and endless wars continue to contribute to global migration, the exception exemplified in the fascist politics of exile will continue to be the rule, as immigrants are deprived of their rights in prison-like structures and relegated to a space where the boundaries between inside and outside, man and beast, are continually blurred.

The concepts studied in this project need not be confined, however, solely to Italians texts and events; indeed, fascism was/is not only an Italian phenomenon. Thus, the entryways into other historical manifestations of fascism are numerous, and we cannot overstate the role of space here, either. The control over space was crucial to the rise of fascism and would remain crucial for those engaging in antifascist organizing and resistance. The same is true for the present day, as fascism continues to occupy public spaces through graffiti, stickers, flyers, and even through those individuals who espouse its genocidal ideology. Over the years, fascism has found ways to reshape itself and adapt to new formats, and thus the question has been further complicated by the emergence of digital spaces in which fascism has managed to rear its ugly head. Accordingly, antifascism has also needed to adapt and find new strategies for combatting fascism and

⁴⁰³ Marco Rovelli, *Lager italiani* (Milan: BUR, 2006), 47. Italics mine.

surveillance, among which we can name doxxing, de-platforming (no-platforming), and the black bloc tactic, among others.

Having said all of this, we must grapple with the fact that—despite the antifascist politics of the leaders of post-war Italy—this did not mean that fascism had been defeated forever, but only suppressed. As Gabriella Romano writes, “Most people carried on, only changing the colour of their shirts, and sometimes not even doing that, as the MSI, *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, a party of “nostalgics”, was allowed to be represented in Parliament.”⁴⁰⁴ Thus, while we may speak of successful resistance, we must also recognize the limitations of these victories. In the 1948 elections, the MSI won 2.01% of the vote, securing six seats in the *Camera dei deputati*. Today, the rise of Italy’s CasaPound is evidence of fascism’s everlasting influence and resolve to assert its relevance in national politics.

To conclude, this dissertation has been, in the most basic terms, a study of the repressive politics implemented during an extended period of crisis and the response of those suffering under this violent oppression. Unfortunately, capitalism has created the conditions that force us to live in a perpetual state of crisis, whether these conditions be related to war, terrorism, housing, illness, the climate, or something else. The death knell of capitalism has been ringing for years, but it has proven itself to be stubbornly resilient and able to adapt in even the most uncertain of times when it had seemed that there was no way for it to do so. Its ability to adapt is, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri suggest, reactive: “capitalism undergoes systemic transformation only when it is forced to and

⁴⁰⁴ Gabriella Romano, *The Pathologisation of Homosexuality in Fascist Italy: The Case of ‘G’* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 5-6.

when its current regime is no longer tenable.”⁴⁰⁵ One thing, however, is certain: the untenability of capitalism—reacting to the crisis that the system itself creates—will ultimately lead to its permanent collapse. Just as many *confinati* knew that the Fascist reign in Italy would come to an end, so too do we know that—someday—we will witness the abolition of capitalism; indeed, it is the only way through which true democracy and liberty may be achieved. In his *Quaderni del carcere*, Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci wrote: “La crisi consiste appunto nel fatto che il vecchio muore e il nuovo non può nascere: in questo interregno si verificano i fenomeni morbosi più svariati.”⁴⁰⁶ This celebrated phrase is perhaps most recognized in English by the loose translation: “The old world is dying and the new world struggles to be born. Now is the time of monsters.” During this time of crisis, it is our duty to continue to fight for a just politics that stands in opposition to the politics of the fascist menace, which has so often found its spiritual twin in the dehumanizing ideology of capitalism. It is my hope that the texts, individuals, and acts of resistance examined in this dissertation serve as a reminder of the oppressive politics inherent in a totalitarian society and of the work to be done in these moments of crisis.

⁴⁰⁵ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 268.

⁴⁰⁶ Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, vol. 1, 311.

Epilogue

Perhaps it is fitting that, as I am finishing a dissertation on internal exile, we are in the midst of a global pandemic caused by the spread of the coronavirus, and thus find ourselves in our own sort of *confinio*, albeit for drastically different reasons. The way in which the disease has been weaponized in order to justify bigotry and racism, however, is perhaps not so dissimilar from the way in which the Fascist regime utilized medical rhetoric to justify its own social hygiene measures. In a tweet on March 16, 2020, President Donald Trump referred to COVID-19 as “the Chinese Virus,”⁴⁰⁷ a notion that has been repeated by many other right-wing politicians and figures in a disgusting display of Sinophobia. This type of rhetoric is not exclusive to those on the right, as even centrist politicians such as Joe Biden have utilized xenophobic language to refer to the virus. In the March 15, 2020 debate between Democratic primary candidates Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders, Biden utilized language insinuating that the coronavirus is akin to being attacked by a foreign state: “This is like we are being attacked from abroad. This is something that is of great consequence. This is like a war. And in a war, you do whatever is needed to be done to take care of your people.”⁴⁰⁸ Making a comparison of this nature only seeks to externalize a threat that cannot be boiled down to an us vs. them discourse, as a virus knows no borders. One of the reasons for which the United States is poorly prepared to deal with a global crisis like a pandemic is precisely because it is entirely

⁴⁰⁷ Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), “The United States will be powerfully supporting those industries, like Airlines and others, that are particularly affected by the Chinese Virus. We will be stronger than ever before!” *Twitter*, 16 Mar. 2020, 6:51 p.m., <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1239685852093169664?s=20>

⁴⁰⁸ Quoted in Lisa Lerer, “The Coronavirus Debate,” *The New York Times*, 16 Mar. 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/16/us/politics/debate-biden-sanders.html>

unlike an attack from a foreign nation. While the US pours hundreds of billions into defense spending each year, it has proven to be entirely incapable of providing its citizens with access to testing and treatment in a time when they need it most. Such lack of infrastructure and disavowal of basic human rights will inevitably affirm the power to make live and let die embodied in the modern biopolitical paradigm, as the number of cases will exceed health care capacity if we do not “flatten the curve,” so to speak. This power is furthermore affirmed in deciding who will receive economic relief during this emergency: is it the worker who has been laid off due to the virus, lost healthcare, and is unable to pay for groceries, rent, and utilities, or is it the billionaire CEO of an airline company? Such decisions indicate who is expendable in a time of crisis and can be connected to the discourses of productivity that I examine in my dissertation. While I disagree with Giorgio Agamben’s recent assertion that “Si direbbe che esaurito il terrorismo come causa di provvedimenti d’eccezione, l’invenzione di un’epidemia possa offrire il pretesto ideale per ampliarli oltre ogni limite,”⁴⁰⁹ there is no doubting that the decisions governments make in times of crisis offer them the opportunity to engage in a nation (re)building project, which will inevitably cast aside those deemed societal pariahs, just as many were cast aside in Liberal and Fascist Italy.

⁴⁰⁹ Giorgio Agamben, “Lo stato d’eccezione provocato da un’emergenza immotivata,” *il manifesto*, 25 Feb. 2020, <https://ilmanifesto.it/lo-stato-deccezione-provocato-da-unemergenza-immotivata/>

Appendix

1. Regio Decreto 6 novembre, 1926 n. 1848

Del confino di polizia

Art. 184

Possono essere assegnati al confino di polizia, con l'obbligo del lavoro, qualora siano pericolosi alla sicurezza pubblica:

1° gli ammonti;

2° coloro che abbiano commesso o manifestato il deliberato proposito di commettere atti diretti a sovvertire violentemente gli ordinamenti nazionali, sociali o economici costituiti nello Stato o a menomarne la sicurezza ovvero a contrastare od ostacolare l'azione dei poteri dello Stato, per modo da recare comunque nocimento agli interessi nazionali, in reazione alla situazione, interna od internazionale, dello Stato.

Art. 185

Il confino di polizia dura da uno a cinque anni, e si sconta in una Colonia o in un Comune del Regno diverso dalla residenza del confinato.

Art. 186

L'assegnazione al confino di polizia e la durata di questo sono pronunziate dalla Commissione provinciale di cui all'art. 168. La Commissione può ordinare l'immediato arresto delle persone proposte per l'assegnazione al confino.

Art. 187

Le ordinanze della Commissione sono trasmesse al Ministero dell'interno per la designazione del luogo di confino e per la traduzione del confinando.

Art. 188

Contro l'ordinanza di assegnazione è ammesso ricorso ad una Commissione d'appello, che risiede presso il Ministero dell'interno, ed è composta dal Sottosegretario di Stato al Ministero dell'interno, che la convoca e la presiede, dall'avvocato generale presso la Corte di appello di Roma, dal capo della polizia, da un ufficiale generale dell'arma dei Reali carabinieri e da un ufficiale generale della Milizia volontaria per la sicurezza nazionale, designati dai rispettivi Comandi generali. Il ricorso deve essere presentato nel termine di giorni dieci dalla comunicazione dell'ordinanza della Commissione provinciale e non sospende l'esecuzione di essa. Anche le deliberazioni della Commissione di appello sono comunicate al Ministro per la esecuzione.

Art. 189

Tanto nel caso di confino in un Comune del Regno, quanto nel caso di confino in una Colonia, il confinato ha l'obbligo di darsi a stabile occupazione nei modi che saranno stabiliti dall'autorità di pubblica sicurezza preposta alla sorveglianza dei confinati. La detta autorità, nel fare al confinato la prescrizione di dedicarsi a stabile lavoro, avrà riguardo alle necessità del luogo e dei lavori pubblici da eseguire, giusta le determinazioni delle competenti autorità. L'assegnato al confino deve, inoltre, uniformarsi a tutte le altre prescrizioni che l'autorità di pubblica sicurezza riterrà di fare. Le prescrizioni stesse sono trascritte sopra una carta di permanenza che è consegnata al confinato, redigendone verbale.

Art. 190

All'assegnato al confino può essere, tra l'altro, prescritto:

1° di non allontanarsi dall'abitazione scelta, senza preventivo avviso all'autorità preposta alla sorveglianza;

2° di non ritirarsi alla sera più tardi e di non uscire al mattino più presto di una data ora;

3° di non detenere né portare armi proprie od altri strumenti atti ad offendere;

4° di non frequentare postriboli, né osterie od altri esercizi pubblici;

5° di non frequentare pubbliche riunioni, spettacoli o trattenimenti pubblici;

6° di tenere buona condotta e di non dar luogo a sospetti;

7° di presentarsi all'autorità di pubblica sicurezza preposta alla sorveglianza nei giorni che saranno indicati, e ad ogni chiamata della medesima;

8° di portar sempre indosso la carta di permanenza e di esibirla ad ogni richiesta degli ufficiali o agenti di pubblica sicurezza.

Art. 191

Qualora il confinato tenga buona condotta, il Ministro per l'interno può liberarlo condizionalmente, prima del termine stabilito nell'ordinanza di assegnazione.

Art. 192

Se il confinato prosciolto condizionalmente tiene cattiva condotta, il Ministro per l'interno potrà rinviarlo al confino sino al compimento del termine, non computato il tempo passato in libertà condizionale o in espiazione di pena.

Art. 193

Il confinato non può allontanarsi dalla Colonia o dal Comune assegnatogli. In caso di contravvenzione, il confinato è punito con l'arresto da tre mesi ad un anno, e il tempo trascorso in espiazione di pena non è computato in quello che rimane di confino.

2. Regio Decreto 18 giugno, 1931 n. 773

Del confino di polizia

Art. 180

(Art. 185 T.U. 1926)

Il confino di polizia si estende da uno a cinque anni e si sconta, con l'obbligo del lavoro, in una colonia o in un comune del Regno diverso dalla residenza del confinato.

Art. 181

(Art. 184 T.U. 1926)

Possono essere assegnati al confino di polizia, qualora siano pericolosi alla sicurezza pubblica:

1° gli ammoniti;

2° le persone diffamate ai termini dell'art. 165;

3° coloro che svolgono o abbiano manifestato il proposito di svolgere un'attività rivolta a sovvertire violentemente gli ordinamenti politici, economici o sociali costituiti nello Stato o a contrastare o a ostacolare l'azione dei poteri dello Stato, o un'attività comunque tale da recare nocimento agli interessi nazionali.

L'assegnazione al confino fa cessare l'ammonizione.

L'assegnazione al confino di polizia non può essere ordinata quando, per lo stesso fatto, sia stato iniziato procedimento penale e, se sia stata disposta l'assegnazione al confino, questa è sospesa.

Art. 182

(Art. 186 T.U. 1926)

L'assegnazione al confino di polizia è pronunciata con ordinanza dalla Commissione provinciale di cui all'art. 166, su rapporto motivato del questore.

Nell'ordinanza è determinata la durata.

La Commissione può ordinare l'immediato arresto delle persone proposte per l'assegnazione al confino.

Art. 183

(Art. 187 T.U. 1926)

Le ordinanze della Commissione sono trasmesse al Ministero dell'interno per la designazione del luogo in cui deve essere scontato il confino e per la traduzione del confinato.

Art. 184

(Art. 188 T.U. 1926)

Contro l'ordinanza di assegnazione è ammesso ricorso ad una Commissione di appello, che risiede presso il Ministero dell'interno, composta dal Sottosegretario di Stato del Ministero dell'interno, che la convoca e la presiede, dall'Avvocato generale presso la Corte di appello di Roma, dal Capo della polizia, da un ufficiale generale dell'Arma dei carabinieri reali e da un ufficiale generale della Milizia volontaria per la sicurezza nazionale, designati dai rispettivi Comandi generali.

Il ricorso deve essere presentato nel termine di giorni dieci dalla comunicazione dell'ordinanza e non ne sospende l'esecuzione.

Anche le decisioni della Commissione di appello sono comunicate al Ministero dell'interno per la esecuzione.

Art. 185

(Art. 189 T.U. 1926)

Tanto nel caso di confino in un comune del Regno, quanto nel caso di confino in una colonia, il confinato ha l'obbligo di darsi a stabile lavoro nei modi stabiliti dall'autorità di pubblica sicurezza preposta alla sua sorveglianza.

L'autorità predetta, nel prescrivere al confinato di darsi a stabile lavoro, terrà conto delle necessità locali e della natura dei lavori pubblici da eseguire, secondo le determinazioni delle competenti autorità.

L'assegnato al confino deve, inoltre, osservare tutte le altre prescrizioni dell'autorità di pubblica sicurezza.

Le prescrizioni predette sono trascritte sopra una carta di permanenza che è consegnata al confinato. Della consegna è redatto processo verbale.

Art. 186

(Art. 190 T.U. 1926)

All'assegnato al confino può essere, fra l'altro, prescritto:

1° di non allontanarsi dall'abitazione scelta, senza preventivo avviso all'autorità preposta alla sorveglianza;

2° di non rincasare la sera più tardi e di non uscire il mattino più presto di una determinata ora;

3° di non detenere o portare armi proprie od altri strumenti atti ad offendere;

4° di non frequentare postriboli, osterie od altri esercizi pubblici;

5° di non frequentare pubbliche riunioni, spettacoli o trattenimenti pubblici;

6° di tenere buona condotta e di non dar luogo a sospetti;

7° di presentarsi all'autorità di pubblica sicurezza, preposta alla sorveglianza, nei giorni che gli sono indicati, e ad ogni chiamata di essa;

8° di portare sempre con sé la carta di permanenza e di esibirla ad ogni richiesta degli ufficiali o degli agenti di pubblica sicurezza.

Art. 187

(Art. 191 T.U. 1926)

Qualora il confinato tenga buona condotta, il Ministro dell'interno può liberarlo condizionalmente, prima del termine stabilito nell'ordinanza di assegnazione.

Art. 188

(Art. 192 T.U. 1926)

Se il confinato liberato condizionalmente tiene cattiva condotta, il Ministro dell'interno può rinviarlo al confino fino al compimento del termine, non computato il tempo trascorso in libertà condizionale o in espiazione di pena.

Art. 189

(Art. 193 T.U. 1926)

Il confinato non può allontanarsi dalla colonia o dal comune assegnatogli.

Il confinato che contravviene alle disposizioni di questo capo è punito con l'arresto da tre mesi ad un anno.

Il tempo trascorso in carcerazione preventiva seguita da condanna o in espiazione di pena detentiva, anche se per effetto di conversione di pena pecuniaria, non è computato nella durata del confino

Il confino cessa di diritto se il confinato è sottoposto a misura di sicurezza detentiva. Se al confinato è ordinata la libertà vigilata, il confinato vi è sottoposto dopo la cessazione del confino.

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