

Corrado Gini

THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF FASCISM¹

A FEW years ago, political scientists would hardly have ventured even to imagine the existence, among our civilized countries, of a government which would not hesitate to place limitations upon any of the liberties of the individual that had been regarded from the beginning of the last century as a sacred heritage of human individuality; a government which would concentrate the effective control of a great part of public power in the hands of few, or of a single person, so as to give almost the impression of a dictatorship; a government which would propose to reform the constitutional and administrative organization of the state, openly characterizing its action in doing so as revolutionary; a government, moreover, which would not shrink from proclaiming itself as representative of the minority of the nation and which would announce its intention to win the consent of the majority by the exercise of force. If the Fascist party, resting on such principles, has attained to power, and thereafter has succeeded not only in maintaining itself, but in strengthening its position and in acquiring the support of large elements even outside of Italy, is not this fact a demonstration that the premises which the scientific world adopts as the basis of political theory and political practice are at least incomplete, if not inexact, in so far as they fail to meet the exigencies of certain situations which can occur in the lives of nations?

The first, perhaps, of these premises, and the one which appears the most obvious, is that the government should rest

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upon the consent of the majority of the citizens and interpret the will of that majority. To-day it would be difficult to deny that the Fascist government enjoys the support of the great majority of the Italian population; but there certainly have been periods, or at least one period, in which that administration did not possess the support of such a majority.

On the other hand, at times when many could have believed that there was no basis for doubt on the subject, the head of the administration, and of the Fascist party, did not hesitate to declare that he was accumulating the necessary force in entire confidence of acquiring the consent of the majority little by little in the future. His expression of his confidence in such terms revealed his assumption that he did not possess it at the time. Again, at times when there was more foundation for doubt concerning the extent of the support of the majority, important spokesmen of the Fascist party proclaimed, amid the applause of the Black Shirts, that the Fascists were disposed to fight and die rather than relinquish power. The impression of objective persons was that those favorable to the Fascist régime constituted, at a given moment, a genuine minority, but a minority ready to die for their chosen cause, while the majority, composed of elements more or less openly opposed to the Fascist régime, did not manifest any comparable interest in the contest.

In this last statement there is, I believe, a basis for criticism of the postulate indicated as the first of those ordinarily set up. That postulate takes for granted—if you examine it carefully—that the majority and the minority which take shape in connection with various questions manifest in the solution of those questions an interest, if not identical with their own magnitude, at least in the same order of magnitude; this, I suggest, is taken for granted not with respect to particular individuals, but with regard to the average of the majority or minority. If we accept the foregoing interpretation as correct, the postulate which we may call that of the right of the majority may be generalized and transformed into the postulate of the paramountcy of interests, according to which the government is to be administered by the part of the population which represents the prevailing interests.

In the ordinary political life of a people, the hypothesis of a corresponding order of magnitude of the interest which the majority and the minority, on the average, manifest in bringing particular questions to solution seems acceptable; and this justifies the adoption of the postulate of the majority as the basis of the ordinary political life of the nation. Even when this hypothesis is not realized, in certain cases there are not lacking correctives which permit the several interests to make themselves effective in proportion to their due weight, regardless of the number of persons who respectively represent them. This circumstance explains why, in practice, the postulate of the majority may serve without grave impairment as a basis for the normal political life of the nation. When, for example, material interests are at stake, the financial elements of importance in the parties at issue assume the leading rôles. Their rôles may well be decisive because of business relations and interwoven interests, even without any open purchase of votes in the determination of an electoral contest, inasmuch as people who from an abstract point of view would favor one solution, vote in practice against that solution when it might operate to the prejudice of the interests of persons or institutions to which they feel themselves intimately bound.

When, on the other hand, interests are at stake not of a material order, but such as to involve the fundamental principles of public and private life, the force of propaganda may be sufficient to draw the vote of the majority to the party which feels most keenly on the question. But when questions of an ideal character are under discussion, questions which most people regard as fundamental and upon which in any case there is a definite opinion hardly capable of being changed, then neither the force of persuasion nor the bonds of interest will suffice to attract the consent of a majority to a minority group. And this is true, no matter how vital may be the interest of the minority in the question, or how relatively indifferent the majority may be to it. When such is the case, it will be understood how it is that the minority feels itself authorized to impose its program upon the majority. Neither from the moral point of view nor from the political point of view is there

anything, as a matter of fact, which can justify a state of affairs wherein one individual whose interests are prejudiced by reason of a given governmental measure or program to the extent, let us say, of ten monetary units, must give way to two individuals each of whom derives, in consequence of the particular program or measure, an advantage to the extent, let us say, of three monetary units.

The negation of the principle of the majority was bound sooner or later to alienate from Fascism the fraction of the Democratic party in Italy which at first had supported it because it saw therein salvation against the invading spirit of Bolshevism, as well as the majority of the Popular party, that is to say, the party of Catholic principles, which has been engaged in a contest with the Socialists for the leadership of the laboring classes in Italy. And in fact this alienation did take place. The conflict with the Liberal party also was certain to develop according as Fascism, which had at the outset presented a program essentially liberal in character, came to adopt, little by little, the program of the Nationalist party, which had supported Fascism in the struggle and had been fused with Fascism after the common victory.

The existence of a government in the hands of the minority is not, after all, when carefully analyzed, in antithesis to the liberal concept of political life, neither as a *means* in so far as the minority government represents the results of the free action of the citizenry, nor, on the other hand, as a *result*, in so far as the minority government satisfies the prevailing interests. But a more obvious gap existed between the liberal theory and the nationalistic theory which was gradually adopted by the Fascist party; and this irreconcilability was destined to show itself very early. The liberal theory assumes that society consists of an aggregate of individuals who must look after their own interests and it regards the state as an emanation of the individual wills intended to eliminate the conflicts between the interests of individuals. The nationalistic theory, on the contrary, views society as a true and distinct organism of a rank superior to that of the individuals who compose it, an organism endowed with a life of its own and with interests of its own.

These interests result from the coordination of the desires for the time being of the current generation together with the interests of all the future generations which are to constitute the future life of the nation. Often enough these are in harmony one with the other, but occasionally the interests of future generations are opposed to those of the present generation, and in any case they may differ notably, if not in direction, at least in intensity. The agency destined to give effect to these higher interests of society is the state, sacrificing, wherever necessary, the interests of the individual and operating in opposition to the will of the present generation.

Hence the concept of the government as an agency to which is entrusted a mission of historical character, a mission which summarizes its very reason for existence. It is an agency, not for the changeable wishes of numerical majorities or of major interests, but rather for the effectuation of a program corresponding to the interests of the national organism. In consequence, therefore, there is the tendency to free the administration from the constant control of parliamentary majorities. Once the program of the administration is approved, the administration henceforth derives its authority directly from the program itself and cannot permit others to interfere with it in giving effect to the program. The justification of measures of restraint upon individual liberties follows from this point of view, although these measures may be opposed to the desire of the majority or, theoretically, of even the entire body of citizens, when such measures of restraint are thought to be necessary in order to give effect to a program identified with the interests of a nation.

The concept which I have outlined briefly seems to be in harmony with that of the Conservative party and especially that of the Conservative branch of the Popular party in so far as the latter sees in certain institutions—such as those of private property, the family, and the Church—cohesive social forces which must be maintained regardless of the individual wishes of particular citizens. It is not surprising that the supporters of these principles who had been identified with the Liberal and Popular parties in the political struggles of recent years

should have abandoned the last-named parties in order to remain favorable to Fascism.

This concept has also points of contact with the Socialist concept in that both assume the ideal of a collectivity superior to the interests of the individuals composing it. On the other hand, Fascism in no sense whatever withholds due recognition of the social importance and individual rights of the laboring classes. On the contrary, Fascism sees in them the living forces of the nation destined to renew the upper classes of society in the course of the ceaseless shift which goes on among the constituent elements of the national organism.

The essential difference between Fascism and the Socialistic current of thought, which has drifted off from the original programs of Communism and Collectivism, consists to-day in the concept of organic unity to which the interest of the individual must be subordinated. The Fascists perceive this unity in the nation, while the Socialists recognize it, at least theoretically—even at the cost of sacrificing their native land—in the larger human society.

This contrast explains why a fairly large part, if not, indeed, the very nucleus, of the Fascist movement has been built up of ex-Socialists who abandoned their party because of, or in consequence of, the war. This observation is particularly true of the younger element in the Socialistic party, including young men of a practical turn, often restless in temperament, who had rallied to the Socialist party not so much because of its positive economic program, as because of its negative program of protest against the aimless individualism of the Liberal régime, and who found in Fascism the means for effectuating their desire to take a part and to reconstruct. It was this element of Socialist origin—to which, as is well known, the head of the party himself belonged—which gave tone to the Fascist program and distinguished it from the position of the former Nationalist party, a position more theoretical than practical in character.

And in a sense this explains the attitude of the Fascist party towards international or supra-national organisms such as the League of Nations, the International Labour Office, and the like.

It is an attitude of natural aversion from organisms tending to place limits upon the free action of the national organism, and, consequently, in a certain sense actually to weaken that organism. On this basis is to be explained the effort not to extend one iota beyond what is necessary the function of such international organisms or the participation of the national government in their proceedings.

The nationalist theories had as their fundamental basis the organic concept of society. Naturally, the acceptance of these theories was destined to bring about the discussion of organic representation which, both before and shortly after the war, had many supporters in Italy and abroad and which had recently been given some effect in the national economic councils of certain countries. This problem was one of the principal matters assigned by the Italian government to a commission of eighteen members, men engaged in public affairs and professors of law and social sciences. The commission was appointed with instructions to prepare for the government a draft of the legislative reforms to be introduced into the organic structure of the state. The majority of the commission favored the introduction into the Parliament of organic representation based upon professional corporations or syndicates. The authorities of the administration accepted the proposal in the form which the writer had the honor of suggesting, to the effect that the organic representation should be provided for in the Senate, which thus would be intended to become elective in part. Without entering upon a discussion of the details which this reform is to embody, it is perhaps worth while to emphasize the fundamental reason for introducing into the country's legislative machinery organic representation supplementary to individual representation, which to-day rests upon a geographic basis in most countries. I may be permitted at this point to quote the opening paragraphs of the report wherein I had the honor to submit to the government my proposals in this connection.¹

¹ This report has been published. See Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, *Relazioni e proposte della Commissione presidenziale per lo studio delle riforme costituzionali*, Rome, 1925, (Provveditorato generale dello Stato, No. 324). The organization of the state along corporate lines is under way in the winter of 1926-27 as the essential preliminary to the reform of the Senate which will be based thereon.

The principle that all citizens, so far as they possess legal capacity to do so, may participate with equal suffrage rights in the political life of the state—the principle which is at the very basis of universal suffrage—fits in with the concept of the state as a means of satisfying the individual aims of citizens. If, indeed, the action of the state possesses an *absolute* importance which varies with the individuals belonging to the several categories of the population, particularly in proportion to their respective wealth, it cannot, on the other hand, be said that the action of the state assumes a *relative* importance systematically different in the lives of those individuals. The poor man's vital necessity for positive action on the part of the state is no less than that of the rich man and in this sense the action of the state cannot be regarded as less important for the poor than for the rich.

But, on the other hand, when the state is regarded as an entity, that is, as an organism standing apart with its own objects and its own requirements, and when individuals are regarded as means to satisfy such objects and such requirements, it is natural that individuals be called upon to participate in the political life of the nation in no other proportion than that of the importance which they assume in the life of the state.

The two points of view have in fact always made themselves effective in the political organization of the state, offsetting each other to some extent. It is easy to understand, however, why the second point of view should come little by little to be emphasized more definitely according as the organization of the state is buttressed in consequence of the extension of its functions, all the more since, in the exercise of the functions more recently assumed, it is easily possible that the objects of the state should differ from the simple sum of the aims and objects of the individuals which compose it. This last hypothesis is borne out with particular frequency in the field of political economy, which in recent years has come to absorb so large a part of the activity of the state; hence it is readily comprehensible why emphasis has been more and more placed upon the necessity for organic representation of the economic functions of the different categories of citizens supplementary to their individual political representation.

In the last paragraph of the foregoing quotation I have drawn attention to the intensification and expansion of the functions of the state. This is one of the manifestations, or rather a con-

sequence, of the progressive organization of society. If, indeed, we may to-day speak appropriately of society as a true and distinct organism—that is to say a totality of elements mutually bound one to the others, existing in a state of equilibrium and possessing the qualities necessary for self-preservation and eventually for the restoration of equilibrium—this is something that probably could not be said with quite as much exactitude for past ages. With the increasing density of populations, the multiplication of all the means of communication, the further subdivision of labor, the increasing refinement of the economic feeling of individuals, the sharpening of the faculty of foresight, it is hardly to be denied that the bonds among regions, among various classes and among individuals have been multiplied, the reactions are more effective and more rapid, equilibrium is, consequently, more nearly stable, and the restoration or readjustment is more rapid and more complete after some abnormal disturbance.¹

In this fact undoubtedly, as well as in the greater correspondence to the realities of life which is derived therefrom by the nationalist theory, is to be found one of the reasons for the increasing favor with which that theory is regarded not only in Italy—where it is accepted by the party now in power—but more or less in all countries, even apart from truly and exclusively legislative provisions.

The more effective organization of a nation naturally leads to a greater coordination of its functions through a central controlling power. The affirmation, for example, of the protectionist theory either in the field of commercial policy or in that of immigration, the submission to governmental control of international credits belonging to private citizens, the intervention of government in conflicts between capital and labor—these things more and more frequently and significantly give expres-

¹ This subject is discussed in the author's series of lectures at the Commercial University "Luigi Bocconi," Milan, during the academic years 1923-24 and 1924-25, published under the title *Patologia Economica*, 3d ed., G. Tenconi, via Stampa 11, Milan (6), 1925. See particularly Lecture IV, § 4, and Lecture XII, §§ 13 and 14. It was again taken up in the *Lezioni di Politica Economica* given during the academic year 1925-1926 to the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Rome. (Rome, Sampaolesi, 1926.)

sion to the nationalist process of thought which demands the subordination of particular interests to those of the nation. However much reason may exist for questioning whether the interests of the nation have always been properly interpreted and whether the intervention of public authority in economic life during and after the war has assumed exaggerated proportions, with perhaps prejudicial consequences, nevertheless it is undeniable that this intervention finds a partial justification in the increasingly strong tendency of modern society toward organization.

But it is not only in regard to the relations existing between private individuals and public authority that the greater capacity for organization of a nation reveals its genuine consequences; these are also to be found in the relations which exist between the various branches of public authority and between their respective agencies, and also in the fashion in which these agencies operate.

One of the tendencies of Fascism to which most attention has been drawn is certainly that of concentrating power. This tendency has manifested itself by emphasizing the attributes of the state as contrasted with those of local authority, by the appointment, for example, of the chief administrator (*podestà*) in each municipality and the governor in the capital, by the limitation of the power of the local authorities to impose further taxation, and by control over the professional associations of employers and employees. It has also shown itself in the lessening of the functions of the legislative chambers as contrasted with those of the cabinet, and, within the cabinet itself, in the strengthening of the authority of the President of the Council, who, without losing legally the position given him in the national constitution, is, according to some observers, gradually coming to assume, practically speaking, the functions of dictatorship.

The head of the government and of the Fascist party, and his followers, have often insisted upon the term "Revolution" by way of describing the process represented by Fascism in the development of the nation. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to find in the development of Fascism the formal extremes of

revolution. The march to Rome might conceivably have resulted in a revolution but in point of fact it was limited to an armed demonstration, the king having given his adhesion to the movement. Thus Mussolini arrived in power in an absolutely legal fashion; and thereafter, he took every precaution to keep within the bounds of formal legality all the measures of an exceptional character which his government adopted. Quite apart from the question of form, the action of the Fascist administration, once it had acquired power, was not shaped in the way in which, generally, revolutionary action is understood to go, namely, to substitute for a limited governing class the control of somewhat more extensive social groups; but rather was it directed to augmenting the power gathered in the hands of those who had managed to establish themselves in control. From this point of view, the development of the Fascist administration may be thought to resemble not so much a revolution in process as a succession of *coups d'état*.

There was no genuine and distinct reaction against the development of the Fascist Government on the part of the majority even though some measures of an unusual character produced at first an unfavorable impression in certain circles. The disorganization which had come to exist during the administrations which preceded Fascism made the great majority of the nation feel the necessity of a strong hand and a united will.

We have witnessed during these years in Italy one of those resumptions of power by a limited number of persons, which, historians tell us, occur from time to time in the life of nations; and it has been a resumption fortunately not requiring a civil war for its fulfilment. The exercise of sovereign and political authority, according to the observation of historians, appears to be concentrated at the outset in the hands of a single individual, and then, little by little, its privileges are expanded through a constantly larger group until it ends by being regarded as a right which theoretically belongs to all the individuals who constitute the nation. But after some time the democratic régime reveals symptoms of degeneration and a monarch, a tyrant or a dictator, or whatever name he may bear, steps in, and the cycle once more begins its course.

As a student of economic problems, I may be permitted to observe that this law of political cycles can find its justification in the light of economic considerations when the classical field of political economy is properly enlarged.¹

The hypothesis usually taken as the basis of economy theory is that labor constitutes a burdensome activity. The more this activity is intensified, the more arduous its consequences become, while the yield diminishes; so that a point is reached which represents the point of equilibrium at which any individual ceases to increase his own productive activity, and is content with such yield as it then produces. But the relation between the yield and the effort required to obtain it differs from individual to individual in the various productive activities which may be undertaken. Thus it is that each devotes himself to the form of productive activity which he prefers and exchanges the product thereof for commodities which others turn over to him. So there comes to be that division of labor the advantages of which were so beautifully set forth by the classical economic school.

But this concept, which is undoubtedly exact for quite a large proportion of human activities, does not hold true for all of them. There are, as a matter of fact, human activities which are not arduous in character. In order that individuals should abandon such activities with a view to devoting themselves exclusively to the activities of a burdensome nature, it would be necessary that the latter should yield a reward such as to compensate not only for the burdensome character of the labor, but also for the surrender of the pleasure derived from the non-burdensome activities. Yet it is only in exceptional circumstances that a reward of this character can be given.

It follows that so far as activities of an attractive character are concerned, the division of labor does not operate at all, and each individual regularly reserves for himself the right of engaging in them. Thus no one of us, although devoted to the exercise of some professional activity, will give up pleasant

¹ On this subject, see the author's *Patologia economica*, Lecture III, § 5; also his *Lezioni di Politica Economica*, pp. 245-248.

activities of various sorts, such as going to the theatre, reading the newspapers, taking walks, making trips and the like, except for some extraordinary reward and under exceptional conditions.

The great majority of these activities of a pleasant nature, nevertheless, have no direct social utility, so that economic science may ignore them; but there are activities of an attractive character which may well be called productive like the arduous activities, inasmuch as they contribute to social organization. Among these pleasant activities is that of exercising authority, which in the present form of society takes the shape of the exercise of sovereignty and participation in public affairs. It follows that if we are to allow economic forces freely to operate, there will be a tendency of citizens each to exercise his own political activity and each to assume some portion of authority. This is the reason why in all periods of history the exercise of sovereignty and political activity has tended inevitably to be divided and subdivided. From this point of view there is something of an analogy with what happens in the physical world in the phenomenon that is known by the name of "degradation of energy". If, for example, two bodies of different temperature are placed side by side, energy tends to pass, as is well known, from the warmer to the colder, and their temperature tends to reach the same level. In society something similar takes place. But when this activity of the exercise of authority—which is essential in a social organization—has reached an advanced stage of subdivision, it loses a great part of its efficacy. It becomes necessary, in order to restore the equilibrium and efficiency of society, that the exercise of authority be restored to unified control by means of a *coup d'état* or a revolution. On the part of many people in many, if not all, countries, there is an impression that the subdivision of the exercise of authority in modern times has gone much too far. This is the reason why Fascism is regarded as an experiment which, if successfully carried out, may exercise a great influence upon the political development of other nations.

The uncertain point in connection with the system of Fas-

cism, now effectuated, is the lack of an objective standard whereby to interpret the interests of the nation. We must not conceal from ourselves the danger that a minority, which has come into power through the exercise of force or in consequence of unexpected developments, will go on maintaining itself by force and yet retain the intention of serving in good faith the true interests of the nation and purporting to carry out the program inspired by those interests, but not in reality corresponding to them. The fact that such an error of foresight may be committed in good faith does not make it any the less dangerous for the nation. On the other hand, it is an error much more easily committed when the number of persons actually endowed with power is very limited.

Nor is it to be denied that a state of affairs in which the prevailing interests are indeed the interests of the majority and fit in well with the higher interests of the nation is clearly to be preferred. But it is when agreement is lacking and not when it exists that the problem presents itself; and in such a case there can be no doubt as to the choice between the desires of the majority on the one hand, and on the other, the paramount interests of a minority which are in harmony with those higher interests of the nation. The objectivity and practical character of the standard suggested by the principle of the majority clearly cannot be a sufficient reason for maintaining that principle in circumstances wherein, as we have observed, its very basic premises do not exist.

It is perhaps in order to add that a government administered by a minority can be regarded in no other fashion than as a transitional solution. Either such a minority government succeeds—because of the excellence of its administration—in winning the consent of the majority, or it embitters the latter and arouses on its part a reaction which ends by making the interests of the majority prevail, and sooner or later it brings about the fall of the minority government. When the President of Council declared that he was accumulating force in anticipation of the consent of the majority, he clearly indicated that he was tending toward a government based upon consent as the position of national stability. It is the general impression that the

Fascist Government has succeeded in this program and to-day possesses a great majority behind it in Italy.¹

In order that the danger to which I have alluded above may be less imminent and the winning of the consent of the majority easier, it is undoubtedly very desirable that the government should maintain the utmost contact with the people and take account of the impressions produced on them by governmental measures, not remaining deaf to suggestions emanating from the people. The Chamber of Deputies, the Provincial Councils, and the Councils of the Communes, as well as party organizations, which constitute the expression of the wills of individuals or of local institutions, should consequently be maintained, if for no other reason than to serve as consultative bodies when the larger problems are under consideration. It is significant in this connection that quite a number of proposals presented to the government by the Commission of Eighteen with the object of giving to the executive power a decisive preponderance over the legislative authority—proposals resisted in the proceedings of the Commission by the writer alone—have been rejected by the government. Indeed, the government, in accepting the idea of making the Senate elective in part, manifested a wish to achieve a larger representation of the nation as a whole in its legislative structure.

On the other hand, the success of a government in which the effective administration of authority is confined to one person or a few persons depends, in the last analysis, upon the quality of this person or of these few persons. The conviction is widely held in Italy that the Fascist régime could hardly have succeeded or persisted if it had not had at its head an individual of the exceptional qualities of Mussolini; and this explains the authority, almost unlimited in extent, which he possesses among the Fascists, and the respect which even those who are wholly opposed to his régime, or indifferent to it, have for him personally.

In conclusion, it seems to me that there can be no doubt

¹ This impression has been materially reinforced by the development of 1926, during which year the majority behind the Fascist régime was very greatly augmented and consolidated.

that the Fascist experiment has had highly satisfactory results in Italy. Among those who have had an opportunity to compare the present situation of Italy with that which existed under the preceding administrations, there is no uncertainty whatever in this connection.¹ The concentration of power in the hands of few men has permitted the revaluation of national ideals, the reestablishment abroad of the prestige of Italy, and the restoration of domestic order. This last achievement has greatly facilitated the economic recovery of the country, dating from the early part of 1922, and that has hastened the financial adjustment in progress. Moreover, the rapid solution of many pending problems has been made possible by the concentration of political authority and many reforms great and small have been effected, some long matters of deep study and others new—reforms which in the aggregate deserve favorable judgment.

But all this does not signify, as I see it, that the success of the Fascist government makes it desirable to attempt analogous experiments in other countries or in other conditions. It is an experiment which exceptional conditions have made necessary and the success of which was realized by an exceptional man, rather than a system of government suitable for all times and all countries. This does not mean that from the experiment itself there may not be learned lessons from which all countries may profit, with regard, for example, to the mutual relations and operation of legislative and executive agencies, with regard also to the organization of parties for purposes of organic representation, with regard finally to the use and abuse of individual liberties.

One other conclusion may be drawn by many from the foregoing considerations to the effect that, in the last analysis, force is what determines a political party's tenure of power. This conclusion, of course, is in no sense novel. It would not be correct if by "force" we understood merely the physical force derived from muscular strength. But if, on the other hand, we understand "force" in the larger sense to represent the power

¹ The satisfactory character of the results of Fascist administration has been greatly emphasized by the economic and financial measures of the last twelve months.

derived from the intellect no less than from the muscles, and, over and above that derived from the intellect, the force which is derived from the weight of interests and the intensity of feeling, the conclusion I have indicated is hardly to be doubted, I think. Originally electoral contests were assemblies of armed individuals generally aware of one another's equal power and consequently regarding themselves as equal, one to the other; they were willing, therefore, to refrain from struggling, and instead found it more practical to agree beforehand in allowing the victory to rest in the hands of the more numerous group, in the conviction that the latter would have won it in any event if the question were put to the decision of arms and not amicably settled. But where the reality of the situation has advanced far beyond the assumption of equal power, either because of diverse social qualities, for example, such as characterize the relations of white and colored races in the United States, or because of the difference in intensity of feeling and of interests such as characterizes the relations during recent years of the Nationalist and Social Democratic parties in Italy—in situations of this sort, there is no legal device or philosophical theory which can prevent the more powerful party from securing the upper hand and actually conquering the place of power, just as there is nothing except some external force which can prevent the body lighter than air from rising, and the body heavier than air from falling to the earth.

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