

## 14 From “state protection” to “private defence”

### Strikebreaking, civilian armed mobilisation and the rise of Italian fascism\*

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On 14 July 1919, the Italian Parliament was discussing a vote of confidence in Francesco Saverio Nitti’s cabinet. Often accused of being an opportunistic politician and a cold-hearted economist, unable to grasp the passions and the new situation created by the end of the war, Nitti’s legacy has often been surrounded by a general antipathy.<sup>1</sup> However, at the time, the government that Nitti was going to lead was seen with great hope. It was born with the ambitious purpose of moving the country away from the legacies of the First World War towards a new future of prosperity.<sup>2</sup> Nitti’s internal policy reflected his economics-oriented background and was well exemplified in the motto “consume less, produce more”, that he repeated again and again during his parliamentary speeches. Usually tolerant and neutral in economic disputes, Nitti’s government was nonetheless harsh and repressive against any real or perceived political demonstrations, often interpreted as the prelude to social revolution and a waste of energies and productive resources.<sup>3</sup>

While parliament was discussing the vote of confidence, Nitti, in his capacity as minister of the interior, issued a circular letter to all the prefects of the Kingdom of Italy. The circular was part of a broad set of measures that the government was taking in response to the impending “super strike” (*scioperissimo*) called by left-wing organisations, parties and unions in solidarity with the Bolsheviks and against the intervention of western powers in Russia.<sup>4</sup> Nitti invited the prefects to “keep in touch” with reliable members of liberal “groups [*fasci*] and veterans’ associations” in order to obtain their “collaboration at times when public authorities cannot remain isolated and only rely on public officials and the public force”. Nitti also invited the prefects to prevent any autonomous initiative:

if such groups want to cooperate to enforce law and order and to repress violence and attempts at revolution, they will act patriotically by voluntarily observing the orders of the authorities and by accepting their leadership in accordance with the regulations, which cannot be but unique.<sup>5</sup>

Interestingly, Mussolini’s newly established *Fasci di combattimento* were among those patriotic organisations that the authorities considered potentially useful for deployment in strikebreaking services.<sup>6</sup>

Nitti's instructions came at a time of panic over the potential revolutionary consequences of the general strike. In March, the leadership of the Italian Socialist Party asserted that the general strike was the main instrument for establishing a socialist republic.<sup>7</sup> Despite these proclamations, however, the strike was a general fiasco for reasons both international and domestic in nature. Not only did other international organisations, and in particular the French General Confederation of Labour, refuse to join the international mobilisation, but, more importantly, leading Italian unions, such as the railway workers' unions, kept working.

Many historians have considered Nitti's 14 July dispatch as part of a political strategy to obtain the approval of ultra-nationalist movements and associations both within and outside parliament.<sup>8</sup> Others saw in it tangible proof that the political authorities of the liberal state had given up the Weberian state monopoly of physical violence.<sup>9</sup> According to Emilio Gentile, such “patriotic” groups reflected a process of “secondary mobilisation” in reaction to the primary mobilisation of left-wing parties and unions. Although they could not be put down to any actual attempt at revolution, nonetheless mass mobilisation during strikes and other demonstrations, requests for wage increases and better working conditions, the contractual power of left-wing organisations and their significant success at general and local elections “were perceived as a real danger by the bourgeoisie and the middle-classes, prompting them to mobilise”.<sup>10</sup>

There is no doubt that these forms of secondary mobilisation were fertile ground for the development of fascism, in terms of both political cultures and membership. At the same time, the huge impact and massive scale of later fascist violence helped cast a shadow on the concrete organisational and violent practices of these former associations, and their cultural and political background has been generally described in the light of a vague anti-socialism.<sup>11</sup>

This chapter argues that strikebreaking – in terms of both work replacement and auxiliary police functions – was a veritable obsession for significant sectors of the middle classes and was at the heart of their armed political mobilisation. Within a broader framework the focus is on the two paradigmatic cases of Bologna and Milan in the immediate post-war years (1919–20).<sup>12</sup> The first two sections show how the founding of strikebreaking groups reflected the crucial role played by work replacement and anti-strike activities in shaping outlooks and mentalities in broad sectors of Italian society. In this regard, the concluding section claims that post-war forms of bourgeois mobilisation can be fully appreciated only by situating them within a longer tradition of armed civilian cooperation between the state authorities and discrete social sectors, especially in the case of major strikes involving public services. This long-term interpretative perspective offers new insights into the origins of the crisis in the Italian liberal state and ultimately can help explain the consensus enjoyed by the armed fascist reaction.<sup>13</sup>

### **Looking for the support of honest citizens**

The circular letter of 14 July was a response to the genuine panic that had spread among the political elites and large sections of the bourgeoisie following a

dramatic series of popular protests against the high cost of living, the so-called *moti per il caro-viveri*. In such a state of affairs, Nitti's entire policing policy was ambitious but also extremely difficult to implement. In his directives, he always stressed the need to rigorously repress social disorder, but at the same time to also "avoid making people think that we want reaction". "I approve whatever has to be done against reckless strikes", he told the prefects, "as long as this does not give the impression that we are carrying out a reactionary policy". His policy may be summarised not so much as "anti-popular and anti-socialist" but rather as "anti-revolutionary"<sup>14</sup> and resulted in the issuing of uncertain and contradictory directives which did nothing but upset everyone. It was with these directives in mind that police authorities dealt with a number of incidents, upheavals, small revolts, riots and lootings. The response usually fell under the banner of bloody repression. In the first two weeks of July 1919 alone – that is, in the period immediately before the circular was sent – about 30 people were killed by police forces; many were wounded and hundreds arrested.<sup>15</sup> This was largely the result of the panic and fear which invested police forces, who were largely undertrained and deficient in number.<sup>16</sup>

Nitti's 14 July circular aimed to be a response to the serious lack of available forces by resorting to the complementary assistance and support of trustworthy social sectors of civil society. This was conceived as an emergency response prior to full implementation of a civilian police force, the Royal Guard of Public Security, that Nitti and the chief of police, Vincenzo Quaranta, worked to establish and that became fully operational in January 1920.<sup>17</sup>

Although determined to obtain the support of reliable citizens, Nitti was also fully aware of the risk that he was taking and was worried – with good reason – that things might get irretrievably out of control. In an "urgent telegram" sent just five days after the original circular letter, he insisted that "cooperation must be regulated and follow obediently the orders of local political authorities"; autonomous initiatives would be "illegal and reckless" as these "would do nothing but fuel dangerous reactions". The prefect, he concluded, "is the only one who has the duty and responsibility to defend public order in the exclusive interests of the country".<sup>18</sup> The effectiveness of such measures is, of course, debatable. Nitti's insistence on local police and political authorities having exclusive control and leadership over forms of civilian collaboration indicates a full awareness of the state's prerogatives. However, he was also convinced that state forces alone would be insufficient to deal with the massive disorders and demonstrations that the country would probably experience. That being so, the support of patriotic citizens and associations in law enforcement and strikebreaking operations was deemed necessary, though extremely dangerous, given the extreme counter-positions and panic over an impending revolution. Nevertheless, Nitti and other government officers decided to play that card, maybe in the hope that this would strengthen the loyal classes' support for the government. At the same time, Nitti's frequent letters and telegrams are telling of his worries over the actual capacity of the authorities to control delegation of the power to enforce law and order to private citizens that he had unleashed.<sup>19</sup>

Although the *scioperissimo* of July 1919 was a flash in the pan, Nitti and other government officials did not abandon the idea of seeking the support of good citizens. On 19 January 1920, the minister of justice and acting prime minister (Nitti was at that time in London), Ludovico Mortara, issued a circular letter to all the prefects in preparation for an upcoming massive railway and postal workers strike. Mortara invited prefects to act with the “most absolute rigour” in order to protect rail infrastructures and passengers. “Using weapons in cases like these”, he added, “is a form of self-defence on the part of the homeland [*Patria*] and civilisation against any wild aggression”. Faced with the “too scarce presence of deployable military units”, Mortara requested prefects to establish “volunteer vigilance squads to effectively enforce public order”. “Such squads”, he stated, should be formed of “honest citizens” and “could be armed, if necessary”.<sup>20</sup>

Mortara’s initiative was soon taken up by other ministers and state officials. Minister of Transport Roberto De Vito invited former railway workers to join the anti-strike squads comprising Navy sailors and engineers, though with little success.<sup>21</sup> Government directives were immediately implemented in many Italian cities. On 20 January, the prefect of Milan, Angelo Pesce, invited industrialists, employers and local politicians to “foster citizens’ reactions against the strike and collaboration with government authorities to overcome deficiencies in public services, and establish squads of volunteers to support the public force”. When the strike broke out the following day, Pesce and the local chief of police (*questore*) organised a corps of about 40 volunteers to take on public order functions.<sup>22</sup> Over 50 volunteer engineers were recruited in southern Italy and dispatched to the north to replace the striking workers.<sup>23</sup> There were also attempts to recruit retired engineers as strikebreakers.<sup>24</sup> Secondary school and university students were particularly keen to offer their time and energies as strikebreakers. In Venice, students, boy scouts and women of the Red Cross worked on trains to secure passenger services.<sup>25</sup> In Florence, 160 volunteers from the Alliance of City Defence took up service in post offices to substitute for strikers.<sup>26</sup> The young black-shirt Mario Piazzesi was proud – though a little bit fatigued – to act as a *crumiro*, a derogative Italian term to indicate a blackleg.<sup>27</sup> He also mentioned, with a touch of envy, that volunteers armed with regular Army rifles had been sent to Bologna to act as strikebreakers.<sup>28</sup>

In Bologna, Mortara’s directive was indeed followed to the letter. From 24 to 29 January, “volunteer vigilance squads” were set up to perform “public order duties”, enjoying the full support of the local military command, the prefect and police authorities. The 123 volunteers, led by “9 officials”, were deployed to protect a train depot and coal yard, substituting for regular troops, which could then be deployed for patrol and public order services. The volunteers were all armed with carbines provided by the military authorities and wore civilian clothes with a “white and red armband”. Improvisation and lack of proper training led to a couple of accidental injuries resulting from the misuse of firearms. Despite such incidents, official reports all agreed that the volunteers were quite effective in preventing thefts of coal and other materials.<sup>29</sup> According to the prefect of Bologna, “their action has been broadly appreciated and should be further encouraged”.

Students from the “pre-military training battalion” also cooperated to substitute for striking postal workers.<sup>30</sup> Military authorities committed to responding to the strike in a similar fashion. General Ugo Sani, the local military commander, issued a wall poster calling for volunteer motorists to transport food and other supplies during the strike. Sani invited “veterans” and “citizens” to enlist in special corps “for the exclusive interest of the country”, in the name of the same “patriotism” that they had shown during the war.<sup>31</sup> Sani’s words are particularly interesting, as they indicate a substantial overlap between external and internal enemies.

The establishment of civilian-government cooperation initiatives stemmed from joint bottom-up and top-down efforts. Patriotic associations dedicated to strikebreaking and work replacement were autonomously mushrooming throughout the country. These included the Permanent Committee for National Defence in Vicenza,<sup>32</sup> the National Alliance in Venice, the Alliance of City Defence in Florence, the Association of Volunteers for Public Services in Rome, the Association for Social Renewal and Defence led by future Prime Minister Ivanoe Bonomi in Mantua and, as we will see, the Association of Social Defence in Bologna and the Committee of Civil Organisation in Milan.<sup>33</sup> These largely spontaneous forms of mobilisation had several points in common with the government’s outlook and actions. While the postal and railway workers strike was still going on, Nitti sent the umpteenth circular letter explaining how to manage the protesters and enforce law and order. The prime minister exhorted prefects to “try to encourage a spirit of resistance in all kinds of forms”. He added that

Citizens in the first place must resist abuses. If people understand the dangers of the present situation, then they have the duty to organise themselves and react. Repression can be avoided only if resistance increases. I approve anything people do in response to excessive strikes, as far as people do not want to merely react.<sup>34</sup>

As Nitti explained, one of the main reasons for preventing and, if necessary, repressing strikes lay in the weakness of the Italian economic system, still largely subject to foreign imports and credits.

It is no surprise then, that what were, for certain sectors of the middle classes and for the authorities, manifestations of patriotism in a collaborative and collective effort to preserve peace and order, for socialist organisations were mere acts of strikebreaking and reaction. According to the Socialist Party’s newspaper *L’Avanti!*, the capitalist bourgeoisie, the government, the conservative press and the bourgeois parties were all working together to call for “the support of self-styled citizens of order to restore public services”. These “so-called citizens” were invited to act as *crumiri*. Some of them, the “daddy’s boys”, “students” and other “loafers by definition”, were deployed for work replacement, substituting for rubbish collectors, stokers and tramway drivers, often inefficiently or unsafely. Others, the newspaper claimed, the more “violent men”, were instead called upon to collaborate in quashing the emancipation of the working classes.<sup>35</sup>

The January 1920 strike in many ways paved the way for new forms of bourgeois mobilisation. From then onwards, civilian volunteering in the case of a strike had two forms. On the one side, there was the defence of public order through the organisation of units of armed volunteer auxiliary police with the aim of supporting and assisting ordinary state police and military forces. On the other side, the mobilisation of citizens responded to the imperative of securing public services, from train and tram services to sanitation, food supplies and street lighting. Strike-breaking practices and volunteer work replacement were, therefore, considered vital to the defence of the social fabric and public order, along with more direct and confrontational forms of repressive intervention. These attitudes mirrored deep-seated and long-standing outlooks and political cultures in large sectors of the Italian middle classes.

### Loss of support

Faced with the perceived threat of complete disruption to the foundations of the social order, various sectors of Milan civil society established a Committee of Civil Organisation (*Comitato di organizzazione civile*) in January 1920. The committee was an "association based on the principles of order and aimed to fight any kind of social movement acting against the principle of state authority and social peace and preventing public services from operating". It fostered inter-class cooperation to prevent social struggle and, at the same time, claimed to help "the poorest people". It gathered together veteran groups, monarchical and liberal clubs, professional associations of shopkeepers and tenants, industrial associations and Benito Mussolini's *Fasci di combattimento*.<sup>36</sup> Following the great postal and railway workers' strike in January 1920, the committee "organised and provided personnel to replace workers on strike"<sup>37</sup> and became the main "reservoir" of patriotic citizens from which volunteers could be recruited. On 19 February 1920, the prefect of Milan, Angelo Pesce, put out a call to raise a corps of "Volunteers of Order". Their aim would be to cooperate with police forces to prevent and repress crimes against "persons and properties" and so quash the wave of criminality that was plaguing the city, also as a consequence of the continuous social disorder. Both private citizens and patriotic associations could apply to become volunteers. All members would be armed with "revolvers or rifles", and those without "gun licences" were provided with "special authorisations". The volunteers were to be organised under the command and responsibility of police officers. Although open to "upright and courageous citizens belonging to any social class and political party", the volunteers received no remuneration and were to patrol the streets in their spare time, so that despite claims of inter-class cooperation, it is somewhat doubtful that the working class played any part in the initiative.<sup>38</sup> The prefect's proposal was warmly received by employers, patriotic associations and politicians.<sup>39</sup> The newspaper *Corriere della Sera* enthusiastically welcomed his commitment to fighting crime and saw in it a prelude to the establishment of a real "city militia [*milizia comunale*]" that could enforce law and order more effectively and more promptly than the

ordinary police forces.<sup>40</sup> Others agreed: a private citizen asked the prefect to create a “corps of Citizens’ Patrols, like those operating in other cities”.<sup>41</sup> As we will see in the last section, these references to militias and Citizens’ Patrols are not accidental.

Although the Volunteers had the approval of the local bourgeoisie, the prefect’s initiative immediately provoked the opposition of Milan’s socialist mayor, Emilio Caldara. In Caldara’s view the Volunteers were a serious threat: “in an atmosphere of passion and high tension [*elettricità*], in which people continuously “fire revolver or rifle shots”, arming volunteer citizens and giving them “the authority to use weapons” was an extreme danger in itself, not to mention a serious embarrassment to “the authority of the state”. The creation of the Volunteers, Caldara prophesied, would mean “the reactionary elements, who had carried out the most provocative strikebreaking actions during working-class agitations, will be able to get a foot in the door of the state police”. This, Caldara concluded, might result in “civil war”. In linking the activities of the Volunteers with those of strikebreakers, Caldara was not simply resorting to the usual socialist argumentation but was stressing the crucial role that the newly established militia would play in social conflicts and, therefore, their implicit partiality.<sup>42</sup> Just a few days after the calls for volunteers to enlist had been put out, Minister of Justice Mortara aligned himself with Caldara’s positions. In fact, given the strong presence of an “anti-socialist party” in Milan, Mortara feared that direct, institutional support for the recruitment of volunteers would have severe political repercussions for the government. At the same time, loyal to his long-lasting commitment to recruiting auxiliary volunteers, Mortara invited Pesce to leave these sorts of initiatives to private citizens and associations, so that the government would not be deemed accountable for their actions.<sup>43</sup> This is a crucial turning point in the attitude of the government. Without formally delegating a portion of the state monopoly to recognised private organisations, but by simply turning a blind eye to forms of vigilantism, Mortara only unleashed forms of organised private violence against the so-called subversives. The consequences would be felt for a long time.

The need to maintain good relations with Milan’s moderate and reformist socialist city administration eventually obliged the government to appoint a new prefect to replace Angelo Pesce.<sup>44</sup> His successor, Enrico Flores, nevertheless pursued the same policy of collaboration with the city’s patriotic forces as his predecessor had done. In June 1920, it was again an impending railway-workers’ strike that pushed the government to look for the collaboration and support of “experienced citizens willing to operate in the public interest”.<sup>45</sup> Nitti asked prefects to collaborate with industrialists and employers, who “are among those most affected by the strike”, in order to create “squads of volunteers” to replace the striking railway workers. Moreover, the support of “citizens willing to cooperate with the authorities to enforce law and order” was extremely welcome as long as they remained under the orders of police officials, Nitti concluded.<sup>46</sup>

In Milan, prefect Flores soon started organising “squads of volunteers” to serve both as replacement workers and as “armed squads” to protect infrastructures, industrial premises, banks and warehouses.<sup>47</sup> Again, however, collaboration with

local patriotic associations under the auspices of government directives was frustrated by political qualms and perplexity. On 17 June, just three days after issuing his first order, the national chief of police, Vincenzo Quaranta, urged the prefect to avoid establishing a "special corps of volunteers to support the police forces" as it was deemed politically compromising for political authorities to take full responsibility for the action. Again, Quaranta suggested not giving "official character to the institution" of the volunteers and "letting private citizens take the initiative".<sup>48</sup>

Despite advice to the contrary, prefect Flores made further agreements with the local military authorities to establish "a civil organisation against popular upheavals". Again, the "civil organisation" would be formed of two branches. A first group, composed of "elements with technical functions" to be recruited with the support of the Regional Federation of Industrialists, would serve as a work-replacement unit to be deployed in case of "interruption to public services". A second group, the "military auxiliaries", would be in charge of enforcing public order under the command of military personnel; all members of this group would be armed with regular military rifles. When popular upheavals broke out on 24 June, a first unit of 200 auxiliaries was recruited.<sup>49</sup> As Flores stated, the "use of every single piece of civilian energy" and the "spirit of initiative", shown by the city's "social organisations", "in support of state powers against any form of public disturbance" had been "my first concern since taking office". The "patriotism", proof of which the good citizens of Milan had demonstrated during the war, had now, according to the prefect, to be redirected in support of "state authority" against internal enemies.<sup>50</sup> The case of Milan clearly shows how the government's contradictory policies and attitudes towards bourgeois mobilisation contributed to create subversive attitudes among the middle classes.

Milan was not the only city where such dynamics occurred. The Association of Social Defence in Bologna is also a somewhat paradigmatic case. It is usually analysed by scholars as a forerunner of local fascism,<sup>51</sup> although its strikebreaking activities have been generally overlooked. Again, this is not to underestimate its connections with the first fascist squads in the city, but rather to stress that those connections were made possible first and foremost by the common ground of anti-strike mobilisation.

The association's early origins lay in the spontaneous reaction to a massive strike. In April 1920 local trade unions and the Chamber of Labour called a general strike in protest at the massacre of Decima di Persiceto (5 April 1920), in which eight day labourers were killed and 45 wounded by the Army. The strike immediately progressed into an almost complete stoppage of public services and factory work, which was on a much wider scale than the railway strike of January. Tired of "those who wanted to suppress the most elementary liberties", a group of citizens established a Civic Committee and prepared an exonerating report to be presented to the government.<sup>52</sup> In the document delivered to Nitti and Quaranta, the citizens stated that the recent strike was "the last event in which we are prepared to take part without the vigorous engagement of volunteer defence and protection". What made them furious, in particular, was the tolerant attitude of the authorities towards strikes that interrupted public services: they had, they claimed,



to suffer the “outrageous event of the suspension of public lighting at night”. The complete interruption of public services and production was considered dangerous not only for economic reasons, but also because “it created a situation of anxiety and distress, made worse by the spread of false news (*voci fantastiche*)”. Panic also spread as soon as the workers at the city bake-house went on strike, as they were immediately accused of starving children. “What else should we wait for”, clamoured one of the leaders of the committee, “no bread can be bought”, “the city has been in darkness for three nights”, “trains have stopped”, there is “no mail”, “no sanitation”.<sup>53</sup>

In the face of such a state of affairs, the report condemned the change in government policy: “not having been invited to give a show of civilian resistance”, as in the past, the “citizens” had no other option than to organise themselves.<sup>54</sup> Faced with the government’s impotence, many citizens started to think they would exercise their natural right of “self-defence”. If the good citizens had so far been “trustful in the very concept of liberty” and “had yielded to the government their means of defence”, now these means had to be “created by ourselves”, the committee declared.<sup>55</sup> According to the supporters of the Civic Committee, the rise of “civil conscience” was first and foremost because of their “loss of confidence” in government action.<sup>56</sup> As soon as the report spread across the city, conservative and socialist newspapers alike spoke of the return of the so-called *pattuglioni* (big patrols),<sup>57</sup> although the committee deemed this a “fantasy”.<sup>58</sup> As we will see, the *pattuglioni* referred to were vigilante formations which had been organised in the pre-war period and had clear connections with the Citizens’ Patrols, a long-established militia that had been cooperating with police forces in patrolling the streets of the city since the early nineteenth century. The issue reached parliament, where the socialist member Lionello Grossi asked the government to explain why a “Committee of citizens in Bologna” wanted to create “organisations with the same duties as those of the State, including those of armed police”. The answer from the under-secretary for home affairs was telling: while he excluded any informal or formal authorisation by the government, “civilian volunteering . . . responded to a free and fully legal individual activity” that the government had to protect from interference.<sup>59</sup>

Established in June 1920, the Association of Social Defence represented the institutionalisation of these first forms of civilian mobilisation. Its statute clearly stated the aims and objectives of the association: “to cooperate . . . in continuing absolutely necessary public services in case of major general or partial strikes, thus making the authorities’ tasks easier”. Strikes were not to be banned, but the freedom to work had to be secured along with the “freedom to strike”, the only “exception” being public service strikes, which had to be absolutely outlawed and repressed.<sup>60</sup> In the following months, the association was involved in multiple propagandistic activities as well as concrete strikebreaking mobilisation. In November 1920, for example, the association created a substitute urban public transport service using lorries supplied by local employers and agricultural entrepreneurs to be deployed in case of strike.<sup>61</sup>

Feelings of betrayal and disdain towards the government did not change when seasoned politician Giovanni Giolitti took office as the new prime minister in

June 1920. In July 1920, the association warned that if the prefect did not prevent a socialist rally from taking place, the "healthiest segments of the citizens would rise up and act in self-defence" against the enemies of "social coexistence".<sup>62</sup> In October, an implicit threat was made by several members of the association and local politicians: they repeatedly stated that in the name of "self-defence" they were ready to react against the "State within the State" represented by socialist local administrations. That these were not just words soon became clear. In a memorandum to the authorities, the leaders of the association publicly stated that their aim was to gather, "always in arms, and always together", all those men who were ready to "defend with any means our principles and our sacred right".<sup>63</sup> On at least one occasion, in November 1920, members of the nationalist paramilitary formation, *Sempre pronti* (Always Ready), guarded the premises of the association.<sup>64</sup> To bolster their propaganda efforts and even their strikebreaking activities, in September the association decided to hire a group of "300 young men, to be armed".<sup>65</sup> The association also made contact with the local fascists led by former anarchist Leandro Arpinati, although it is unlikely they recruited any of them. The local black-shirts soon assumed a role as the armed wing of fearful citizens. As many historians have reconstructed it, the Association of Social Defence in some way paved the way for the full development of local fascism, which found spaces of initiative and a broad consensus for its violent and brutal methods among wide sectors of the respectable bourgeoisie. The so-called massacre of Palazzo D'Accursio, in which fascist action squads from Bologna, Ferrara and other cities of the Po Valley provoked a series of incidents and violent confrontations on the day Bologna's new socialist administration was inaugurated (21 November 1920), left 11 people dead: ten socialist militants and one nationalist councillor, Giulio Giordani, who quickly rose to become a "fascist martyr". According to the national chief of police, the event was the starting point of a process of legal and illegal dismantling of socialist presence in the economic, political and social life of the province and, more generally, the beginning of a mass campaign of destruction carried out by fascist squads throughout northern and central Italy in the months to come.<sup>66</sup>

### **Long-lasting self-defence of the bourgeoisie**

As the examples cited have shown, strikes were not merely economic manifestations but a genuine obsession and a real nightmare for large segments of the Italian middle classes. The Association of Civil Defence's report clearly outlined the true panic that strikes aroused. References to dark cities without public lighting, dark hospitals where patients were left without care, fathers unable to feed hungry children, the spread of false news that "nobody can confirm", conjured powerful images of a social order shaken to its foundations.<sup>67</sup> The very same Volunteers of Order in Milan were (allegedly) established to counter the spread of crime that was making the city unsafe. Right-wing newspapers, civilian associations and state authorities alike used highly politicised and almost apocalyptic terms. The Volunteers were needed to carry out the "sound work of civil

preservation” in order to “eradicate once and for all the evil tree” of criminality, claimed prefect Pesce.<sup>68</sup> Mortara, in urging prefects to organise corps of volunteers, contrasted the efforts of “honest citizens” with the “wild aggression” of subversives.<sup>69</sup>

While Italian authorities did not underestimate the potential threat represented by the strike wave that hit the country in the immediate post-war months, they probably failed to fully grasp what the strikes, disorder and protests represented for “honest citizens” and certainly failed to appreciate the lack of trust held by these good bourgeois citizens in how the state was dealing with the increasing social conflicts. This contributed to a significant underestimation of the inherent psychological and emotional power of the strikes. Those involving public services, in particular, were seen as a threat to the entire foundation of society, not only because their supposed aim was to ignite revolution, but also because they prevented the orderly functioning of society and caused a waste of public money. Behind the interruption of the electricity supply, many saw the spread of criminality in dark cities; behind the stoppage of local trains and tramways, a blow to individual freedom of movement; behind the strike of municipal bakeries, a threat to children and the sanctity of the family; behind the strike of agricultural day labourers, the first step towards collectivisation and a threat to national wealth. Such fears could not simply be considered propagandistic claims; they in fact mirrored deep-seated political cultures and outlooks that made it almost impossible to see strikes anything other than clashes of “civilisation”.

Faced with what they believed was an impending revolution, local associations and committees and state authorities spoke of the necessity for “self-defence”. Self-defence soon became a social imperative, totally unrelated to the very rigorous and limited specimens of criminal law.<sup>70</sup> Referring to popularised versions of the social contract and natural law doctrines, honourable citizens always insisted on their right to defend themselves where the state failed to provide protection and defence. In a letter to the local prefect, the Association for Social Defence spoke of the need to act in “self-defence against the wounded dignity” of “citizens”.<sup>71</sup> An article in the conservative newspaper *Il Progresso* was even more explicit:

in the same way the Law forbids individuals to use weapons, but allows it for legitimate self-defence, so, too, should the community be allowed legitimate self-defence. The bourgeoisie, stifled by insane and criminal people, see their own existence as being in great danger. . . . They have not only the right but the duty to resist and fight.<sup>72</sup>

Mortara himself – despite his legal education and his position as a senior magistrate – stated that “using weapons” in cases of major strike was a “form of self-defence to protect the homeland (*Patria*) and civilisation against any wild aggression”.<sup>73</sup>

Undoubtedly, the deep political crisis that affected Italy in the aftermath of the Great War was largely the result of huge problems inherited from the war period. However if we look at it from a specifically strikebreaking angle, interesting

continuities with the pre-war period emerge. The introduction of the 1889 Penal Code recognised workers as having both the right to strike and the right to work. After some years in which the code was not substantially implemented in terms of concrete protection of workers’ rights, Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti introduced a new policing policy based on state neutrality in social conflicts. There were, however, significant exceptions. Pasquale Arena, a professor of law, claimed in 1908 that the state should act according to the “holy right of self-defence” and use both repression and replacement workers in response to public service strikes. “No one can deny the state the opportunity to ban public service strikes in order to defend its own existence”, stated his colleague Guglielmo Sabatini.<sup>74</sup>

Continuities also emerged in terms of actual practices of civilian mobilisation. Throughout the chapter we have seen that in Bologna, in particular, but also in Milan, patriotic citizens or organisations referred several times to patrols or *pattuglioni* (i.e. big patrols). The terms come from a very specific institution particular to Bologna, the so-called Citizens’ Patrols (*Pattuglie cittadine*). Established in 1827, under papal rule, the Patrols were intended to support local police forces in patrolling the streets at night, a task they retained after Italian unification. Although largely ineffective and disorganised, they nevertheless represented an institutional opportunity for the grouping of bourgeois reaction during the major strikes of 1906 and 1908 and again during the so-called Red Week of 1914. The *pattuglioni* were in fact groups of “good citizens” which took to the streets shoulder to shoulder with members of the Citizens’ Patrols, forming indeed “big patrols”. They performed strikebreaking tasks, which soon degenerated into vigilante activities. They made arrests and carried out searches autonomously and on one occasion tried to destroy the local Chamber of Labour.<sup>75</sup>

In the new and highly conflictual context of the immediate post-war years, it is interesting that references were made to Patrols and *pattuglioni* to justify legitimised forms of strikebreaking and vigilantism. According to the conservative, but pro-government, newspaper, *Il resto del Carlino*, the Association of Social Defence had tried to resurrect the *pattuglioni* of 15 years earlier. True “liberal consciousness”, the newspaper claimed, “rejects this: it rejects this because it is against the very conception of state authority and the modern state”.<sup>76</sup> Others, in contrast, wholeheartedly praised the re-establishment of *pattuglioni* as the sole and unique reaction against impotent authorities.<sup>77</sup> The “myth” of the Patrols helped place the new phenomenon of fascist *squadrisimo* within a longer tradition of civilian mobilisation and violence. Writing a few weeks after the March on Rome, a semi-unknown law scholar, Ettore Vulterini, resorted to the example of the Citizens’ Patrols (“a private armed corps”) in Bologna to justify the violent actions perpetrated by fascist squads. According to Vulterini, to save the state and social order, citizens had the right to organise themselves and, weapons in hands, to react against “delinquency and thugs”. This was what citizens in Bologna had done as members of the Patrols and the *pattuglioni* before the war and immediately after the end of the conflict, and what fascists had done in more recent times, Vulterini sustained. Such forms of self-organisation were considered a fully legitimate reaction to mortal threats to the nation once the ordinary police forces proved to be impotent and weak.<sup>78</sup>

By looking at the interplay and mutual relationships between state authorities and patriotic associations through the lens of armed voluntarism, this chapter has highlighted the crucial role played by strikebreaking in radicalising the social struggle and making private intervention a fully legitimised course of action. The persistence of patterns, experiences and models, for example in terms of the debate on state intervention in public service strikes or anti-strike activities, made post-war strikebreaking a plausible, thinkable and ultimately legitimate course of action.

Mortara's and Nitti's attempts to involve "honest citizens" in the defence of order and "civilisation" was a huge political gamble. However, this did not necessarily represent a dismissal on the part of the Italian authorities of the state monopoly on physical violence. As many scholars have shown, forms of cooperation between legal authorities and good citizens precisely in the case of major strikes were common throughout Europe, both before and after the Great War.<sup>79</sup> However, civilian mobilisation in Italy took on quite strong vigilante implications, as the recurrent references to self-defence testimony.<sup>80</sup> Members of the Association of Social Defence or the Committee of Civil Organisation were not hotheads or ultra-reactionary mobs; they were men wholly concerned with the need to restore order and the correct functioning of society and the economy disrupted by strikes and popular upheavals. While they wanted to restore law and order and strengthen state authority, their very existence was the consequence of a derogation from the principle of state monopoly on physical violence. We have seen that Nitti's and Mortara's instructions, as well as those given by prefects at the local level, clearly testify to an acknowledgement of the state's prerogative to have exclusive and full control over the civilian volunteers. However, this prerogative could in many cases be ignored in the light of contradictory instructions and political opportunism, as happened in Milan after Mayor Caldara's protests. This had the effect of paving the way for forms of autonomous mobilisation by "honourable citizens", completely outside state control and legitimisation. After all, calling for the support of patriotic citizens was a risky political gamble: if the state was strong, credible and legitimised, then both state authorities and private citizens would feel themselves part of the same community of destiny; if the state was de-legitimised and there was a wide discrepancy between rulers and civil society, then a call for help and support would be perceived as a sign of weakness and would encourage vigilante (i.e. anti-state) initiatives. What is paradoxical is that Nitti and other government officers justified their contradictory attitude towards supporting civilian mobilisation in the name of political impartiality, electoral opportunism and, ultimately, respect for the state's role as a neutral and impartial mediator in social conflicts. It was this perceived betrayal in the name of democratic and liberal principles (no matter how opportunistic they might be) that pushed the now mobilised "honest citizens" to go it alone, precisely in the name of self-defence. In the face of a weak state and an impending socialist threat, breaking the law was the only way, they believed, to restore law and order. It was in the grey zone between the defence of public order and fears of subversion that fascism could prosper.

This does not mean, however, that the ultimate convergence of these “good citizens” into fascism was inevitable. The contradictory attitudes of the political elites towards the involvement of private citizens in public order and strikebreaking tasks helped shed light on the difficulties the liberal elites encountered in finding a credible balance between order and freedom in times of rapid social and political change. The political system was “incapable of answering citizens’ requests for change but nevertheless capable of preserving and reproducing itself”.<sup>81</sup> Nitti’s attempt to involve private citizens in the defence of the state was just the last stage in a long and conflictual relationship between the Italian state and its “loyal classes”. In the context of the liberal state’s enduring crisis of legitimisation, solutions were extremely hard to find, if they might be found at all. In a speech in 1914, Alfredo Rocco, a law scholar and future minister of justice during the fascist dictatorship, spoke of the necessity to substitute “state protection” with “private defence”. “The private intervenes”, Rocco argued, “when the State has broken down. . . . Therefore, what should be condemned is not private defence in itself but the return of the State to past eras of juridical evolution”.<sup>82</sup> In the light of these words, we may wonder whether the involvement of private citizens in public functions might have had some chance of success in strengthening the shaken legitimacy of the liberal state.

Nitti’s gamble was an attempt to bring the country out of political stalemate. In the end, all it did was open a Pandora’s box. Paradoxically, the fragile legitimacy of the liberal state was ultimately destroyed by neither popular upheaval nor the consequences of full democratisation but by those forces mobilised to oppose them.

## Notes

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- 1 Roberto Vivarelli, *Storia delle origini del fascismo: l’Italia dalla grande guerra alla marcia su Roma*, Vol. 1 (Bologna: il Mulino, 1991), 462–89. On Nitti, see, among others, Francesco Barbagallo, *Francesco S. Nitti* (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1984); Michele Cento, *Tra capitalismo e amministrazione: il liberalismo atlantico di Nitti* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2017).
- 2 See the circular letter of 27 June 1919 to the prefects of the kingdom, in Vivarelli, *Storia delle origini del fascismo*, 1, 622–23.
- 3 Vivarelli, *Storia delle origini del fascismo*, 1, 471.
- 4 Guido Neppi Modona, *Sciopero, potere politico e magistratura, 1870–1922* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1979), 221–22; Vivarelli, *Storia delle origini del fascismo*, 1:478–89. On 1919 social conflicts see, among others, Roberto Bianchi, *Bocci Bocci. I Tumulti Annonari Nella Toscana Del 1919* (Firenze: Olschki, 2001); Roberto Bianchi, *Pace, pane e terra. Il 1919 in Italia* (Roma: Odradek, 2006); Roberto Bianchi, *1919: piazza, mobilitazioni, poteri* (Milano: Egea, 2019); Fabio Fabbri, *Le origini della guerra civile. L’Italia dalla Grande Guerra al Fascismo (1918–1921)* (Torino: Utet, 2009).
- 5 The circular letter is transcribed in Vivarelli, *Storia delle origini del fascismo*, 1:623. See also in Archivio di Stato di Bologna, Gabinetto di prefettura (thereafter, ASBo, GP), 1305.
- 6 See Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini. Il Rivoluzionario: 1883–1920* (Torino: Einaudi, 1965), 538–39.

- 7 Neppi Modona, *Sciopero, potere politico e magistratura*, 217. See also Pietro Nenni, *Storia di quattro anni: 1919–1922* (Roma: Einaudi, 1946), 32–33.
- 8 Vivarelli, *Storia delle origini del fascismo*, 1:488–89; Bianchi, *Bocci Bocci*, 303.
- 9 See, for example, Marco Mondini, *La politica delle armi. Il ruolo dell'esercito nell'avvento del Fascismo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006), 61; Fabbri, *Le origini della guerra civile*, 91–92, 159–61.
- 10 Emilio Gentile, *Storia del Partito fascista 1919–1922: movimento e milizia* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1989), 78.
- 11 There are few exceptions, though: Angelo Ventrone, *La seduzione totalitaria: guerra, modernità, violenza politica: 1914–1918* (Roma: Donzelli, 2003); Silvia Becherini, “‘Borghesi fiorentini, muovetevi! Inorgete!’: L’Alleanza di Difesa cittadina e la mobilitazione antisocialista a Firenze nel primo dopoguerra,” *Rassegna Storica Toscana* LXIII, no. 2 (2017): 335–83.
- 12 The examination of similar dynamics in the rural context, in Matteo Millan, “‘The Public Force of the Private State’ – Strikebreaking and Visions of Subversion in Liberal Italy (1880s to 1914),” *European History Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (2019): 625–49.
- 13 Fabbri, *Le origini della guerra civile*, 96.
- 14 Nitti to prefects, 29 April 1920 and 23 January 1920, in ASBo, GP, 1319.
- 15 Fabbri, *Le origini della guerra civile*, 87.
- 16 Lorenzo Donati, “La Guardia Regia,” *Storia Contemporanea* 8 (1977): 441–87; Marco Mondini, “L’Arma dei Carabinieri,” in *Gli italiani in guerra. Conflitti, identità, memorie del Risorgimento ai giorni nostri, IV, Il Ventennio fascista*, ed. Giulia Albanese and Mario Isnenghi (Torino: Utet, 2008), 159–65.
- 17 Luca Madrignani, *La guardia regia: la polizia italiana nell'avvento del fascismo (1919–1922)* (Milano: UNICOPLI, 2014).
- 18 Nitti to prefects, 19 July 1919, ASBo, GP, 1305.
- 19 Copy of the telegram from Nitti to prefects, 14 July 1919, in ASBo, GP, b. 1305.
- 20 Mortara to prefects, 19 January 1920, in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ufficio Cifra, Telegrammi in partenza. On Mortara see Massimiliano Boni, *Il figlio del rabbino: Lodovico Mortara, storia di un ebreo ai vertici del Regno d’Italia* (Roma: Viella, 2018).
- 21 Boni, *Il figlio del rabbino*, 171.
- 22 Gerardo Padulo, “Un Prefetto Conservatore: Angelo Pesce,” *Annali dell’Istituto per gli Studi Storici*, no. VI (1979–1980): 303–4.
- 23 *L’Avanti!*, 22 January 1920.
- 24 See various records in ASBo, GP, b. 1319.
- 25 Raffaele A. Vicentini, *Il Movimento fascista veneto attraverso il diario di uno squadrista* (Venezia: Zanetti, 1935), 26.
- 26 Becherini, “Borghesi fiorentini, muovetevi! Inorgete!,” 367.
- 27 On the origin of the word “crumiri” or “krumiri”, see Millan, “‘The Public Force of the Private State’,” 632.
- 28 Mario Piazzesi, *Diario di uno Squadrista Toscano: 1919–1922* (Roma: Bonacci, 1981), 64.
- 29 Prefect to Army Corps of Bologna (22 January 1920), Report on the services of a “group of citizens”, in ASBo, GP, b. 1319.
- 30 Prefect to the Army corps commander (3 February 1920), in ASBo, GP, b. 1319.
- 31 Billboard, signed by general Ugo Sani, in ASBo, GP, 1319. On Sani see also Mondini, *La politica delle armi*.
- 32 Mario Passuello and Nevio Furegon, *Le origini del fascismo a Vicenza e le lotte sociali fra il 1919 e il 1922* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1981), 81; Francesco Benacchio, “Le leghe rosse nel Vicentino del primo dopoguerra,” in *La classe, gli uomini e i partiti, Storia del movimento operaio e socialista in una provincia bianca: il Vicentino: 1873–1948*, ed. Emilio Franzina (Vicenza: Odeonlibri, 1982), 656–60.
- 33 Gentile, *Storia del Partito fascista*, 73–77. See also Roberto Cantagalli, *Storia del Fascismo fiorentino 1919–1925* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1972). On the Alliance of City

- Defence of Florence see Bianchi, 1919, 140–44; Becherini, "Borghesi fiorentini, muovetevi! Inorgete!"
- 34 Nitti to prefects, 23 January 1920, in ASBo, GP, b. 1319.
- 35 Anonymous, "Tristizie Borghesi," *L'Avanti!* January 22, 1920; anonymous, "Quei cari studenti!," *L'Avanti!* January 23, 1920.
- 36 List of patriotic associations, 22 July 1920, in Archivio di Stato di Milano, Gabinetto di prefettura (hereafter ASMi, GP), 192.
- 37 Questore of Milan to prefect, 5 July 1920 and 22 July 1920, in ASMi, GP, 192.
- 38 Decree of the prefect, 19 February 1920, and Letter of the prefect to various patriotic associations (20 February 1920), in ASMi, GP, 192. A partial reconstruction of the role of the volunteers also in Padulo, "Un Prefetto Conservatore."
- 39 Senator to prefect, 20 February 1920, Popular Liberal Association to prefect, 20 February 1920, Association of Traders, Shopkeepers and Industrialists to prefect, 23 February 1920, in ASMi, GP, 192.
- 40 Anonymous, "Il Corpo dei Volontari dell'ordine," *Corriere della Sera*, February 21, 1920.
- 41 Astorre Alessandri to prefect, 24 February 1920.
- 42 Letters of Caldara to prefect Angelo Pesce, 20 and 21 February 1920, in ASMi, GP, 192. See also, Anonymous, "La guardia bianca," *L'Avanti!* February 22, 1920.
- 43 Mortara to prefect of Milan, 27 February 1920, in ASMi, GP, 192.
- 44 Padulo, "Un Prefetto Conservatore."
- 45 Chief of police Vincenzo Quaranta to all the prefects, 14 June 1920, in ASBo, GP, 1319.
- 46 Nitti to all the prefects, 12 June 1920, in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ufficio Cifra, Telegrammi in partenza.
- 47 Prefect of Milan to Minister of Interior (19 June 1920), in ASMi, GP, 192.
- 48 Chief of police to prefect, 17 June 1920, in ASMi, GP, 192.
- 49 Prefect Flores to general De Albertis, 2 July 1920, general De Albertis to prefect, 23 June 1920, in ASMi, GP, 192.
- 50 Prefect Flores to general De Albertis, 2 July 1920, in ASMi, GP, 192.
- 51 Nazario Sauro Onofri, *La strage di Palazzo d'Accursio. Origine e nascita del fascismo bolognese 1919–1920* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1980), 205–18; Nazario Sauro Onofri, "1913–1922, Un decennio storico per Bologna: dalla rivoluzione rossa alla reazione nera," in *Bologna 1920. Le origini del Fascismo*, ed. Luciano Casali (Bologna: Cappelli, 1982), 57–92; Fiorenza Tarozzi, "Dal primo al secondo Fascio di combattimento: note sulle origini del Fascismo a Bologna (1919–1920)," in *Bologna 1920: Le origini del Fascismo*, ed. Luciano Casali (Bologna: Cappelli, 1982), 93–114; Jonathan Dunngage, *The Italian Police and the Rise of Fascism: A Case Study of the Province of Bologna, 1897–1925* (London: Praeger, 1997).
- 52 *Avvenire d'Italia*, 17 April 1920.
- 53 Letter of Masetti Zannini, *L'avvenire d'Italia*, 24 April 1920.
- 54 According to Onofri, this led to an immediate reinstatement of the 14 July 1919 circular letter: Onofri, *La strage di Palazzo d'Accursio*, 208.
- 55 Memorial of 10 April 1920, in ASBo, GP, 1322.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 *Il resto del carlino*, 17–18 April 1920; *La squilla*, 17 April 1920.
- 58 *Avvenire d'Italia*, 20 April 1920.
- 59 *Atti parlamentari*, 5 May 1920, 1777 and *Atti parlamentari*, 24 June 1920, 2362.
- 60 Questore to prefect, Statute of the Association of Social Defence, 26 June 1920, in ASBo, GP, 1322.
- 61 Prefect to Minister of Finance, 18 November 1920, in ASBo, GP, 1322.
- 62 Association of Social Defence to prefect, 30 July 1920, and Proclaim of the Association, 29 July 1920, in ASBo, GP, 1322.
- 63 Camera dei deputati, Commissione parlamentare per l'accertamento dei fatti avvenuti a Bologna, 1921, Legislatura XXV 1919–1921, Allegato 27, 146–47.



- 64 Camera dei deputati, Commissione parlamentare per l'accertamento dei fatti avvenuti a Bologna, 1921, Legislatura XXV 1919–1921, Allegato 8, 56.
- 65 Questore to prefect, 17 September 1920, in ASBo, GP, b. 1322. Conversely to Onofri, *La strage di Palazzo D'Accursio*, 215; Mondini, *La politica delle armi*, 68; Dunnage, *The Italian Police and the Rise of Fascism*, 102, I found no evidence that the 300 armed men were actually recruited and that the initiative had the placet of the prefect. Onofri, who first stated this, gives no evidence of the statement.
- 66 Memoriale Vigliani, in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ps 1921, b. 90. See also Fabbri, *Le origini della guerra civile*, 349–58; Gentile, *Storia del Partito fascista*, 149–52; Onofri, *La strage di Palazzo d'Accursio*.
- 67 See, "Istigazione a delinquere," *Il Progresso*, 21 April 1920. See, different examples, in Mark Jones, *Founding Weimar: Violence and the German Revolution of 1918–1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Matteo Millan, "The Shadows of Social Fear: Emotions, Mentalities and Practices of the Propertied Classes in Italy, Spain and France (1900–1914)," *Journal of Social History* 50, no. 2 (2016): 336–61.
- 68 Prefect to patriotic associations, 20 January 1920, in ASMi, GP, 192.
- 69 Mortara to prefects, 19 January 1920, in ASBo, GP, 1319.
- 70 According to the Italian penal code, self-defence was an exceptional and extreme necessity to preserve life and goods in case of impossible intervention by the state to enforce law and order (art. 49 of the 1889 Penal Code). On the different meanings of self-defence in pre-WWI Italy, see Matteo Millan, "Sostituire l'autorità, Riaffermare la Sovranità. Legittima Difesa, Corpi Armati e Crisi dello Stato nell'Italia Giolittiana," *Studi Storici*, no. 1 (2019): 139–66.
- 71 Association for Social Defence to prefect, 30 July 1920, in ASBo, GP, 1322.
- 72 "Istigazione a delinquere," *Il Progresso*, April 21, 1920.
- 73 Mortara to prefects, 19 January 1920, in ASBo, GP, 1319. See also Gianfranco Faina, *Lotte di classe in Liguria dal 1919 al 1922* (Firenze: Nuova Italia, 1965), 37; Padulo, "Un Prefetto Conservatore," 303.
- 74 Pasquale Arena, *Dei delitti contro la libertà del lavoro* (Torino: Bocca, 1908), 286; Guglielmo Sabatini, *I delitti contro la libertà del lavoro: nella sociologia, nella legislazione e nella psicologia collettiva* (Catanzaro: Tipografia del Tramonto, 1904), 136–37. On this see also Millan, "The Public Force of the Private State".
- 75 On the Citizens Patrols and *pattuglioni* see Matteo Millan, "In Defence of Freedom? The Practices of Armed Movements in Pre-1914 Europe: Italy, Spain and France," *European History Quarterly* 46, no. 1 (2016): 48–71; Matteo Millan, "Milizie Civiche Prima Della Grande Guerra. Violenza Politica e Crisi Dello Stato in Italia e Spagna (1900–1915)," *Storica* 20, no. 58 (2014): 49–84; Dunnage, *The Italian Police and the Rise of Fascism*.
- 76 "Il volontariato civile," *Il resto del carlino*, 18 April 1920.
- 77 Letter of Masetti Zannini, *L'avvenire d'Italia*, 24 April 1920.
- 78 Ettore Vulterini, "Arditi Comunisti e Squadre d'azione Fasciste," *Rivista di Psicologia* XVIII–XIX (1923/1922): 40–42.
- 79 See the Introduction to this volume.
- 80 See Christopher Joseph Nicodemus Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 140–43; Les Johnston, "What Is Vigilantism?" *The British Journal of Criminology* 36, no. 2 (1996): 220–36; David Kowalewski, "Vigilantism," in *International Handbook of Violence Research*, ed. Wilhelm Heitmeyer and John Hagan (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publisher, 2003).
- 81 Luigi Bonanate, "Some Unanticipated Consequences of Terrorism," *Journal of Peace Research* 16, no. 3 (1979): 205.
- 82 A. Rocco, "Contro la politica dei dubbi, delle incertezze e della rinuncia vile. I nazionalisti in piazza (1914)," in Id., *Scritti e discorsi politici*, Vol. I (Milano: Giuffrè, 1938), 189.