Mussolini on Fascism 
In 1932, after ten years in power, the Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini 
wrote a short article for an Italian encyclopedia outlining the political and 
social ideas that informed the regime that he headed. It was an effort to pro- 
vide some philosophical coherence for the various measures and policies that 
had characterized the first decade of his rule. (See pp. 988—90 for background 
on Italian fascism.) 

BENIT0 MUSSOLINI 
The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism 
1933 
A bove all, Fascism believes neither in the pos- 
sibility nor the utility of perpetual peace. It thus 
repudiates the doctrine of Pacifism—born of a re— 
nunciation of the struggle and an act of cowardice 
in the face of sacrifice. War alone brings up to its 
highest tension all human energy and puts the stamp 
of nobility upon the peoples who have the courage 
to meet it... *This anti-Paciiist spirit is carried by 
Fascism ewn into the life of the individual; it is 
the education to combat, the acceptation of the risks 
which combat implies, and a new way of life for 
Italy.Thus the Fascist... conceives of life as duty and 
struggle and conquest, life which should be high and 
full, lived for oneself, but above all for others— 
those who at hand and those who far distant. 
contemporaries, and those who will come after... 
Fascism repudiates any universal embrace, and 
in order to live worthily in the community 
ilized peoples watches its contemporaries With vig- 
ilant eyes.... 
Such a conception of Life makes Fascism the 
complete opposite of... Marxian Socialism, the ma- 
terialist conception of history; according to which 
the history of human civilization can be explained 
simply through the conflict of interests among the 
various social groups and by the change and 
ment in the means and instrumencs of production.. 
Fascism, now and always, believes in holiness and in 
heroism; that is to say, in actions influenced by no 
economic motive, direct or indirect.... It follows that 
the existence of an unchangeable and unchanging 
war is also denied.... And above all Fascistn 
nies that can be the preponderant force 
in the transformation ofsociety.. Fascism repudi- 
ates the conception of "economic" happiness, to 
be realized by Socialism.... Fascism denies che valid- 
ity of [he equation, well-being = happiness, which 
Source: Benito Political DOI-trine 
of Fascism, translated by Jane Soames (London; Leonard 
and Virginia Woolf at the Press. 1933). 
would reduce men to the level of animals, caring 
for one thing only—to be fat and well-fed and 
would thus degrade humanity to a purely physical 
existence. 
After Socialism, Fascism combats the whole com- 
plex system of democratic ideology, and repudiates 
it.... Fascism denies that the majority, by the simple 
fact that it is a majority, can direct human society, it 
denies that numbers alone can govern by means of 
a periodical consultation, and it affirms the immut- 
able, beneficial, and fruitful inequality of mankind, 
which can never be permanently leveled through 
the mere operation of a mechanical process such as 
universal suffrage. The democratic regime may be 
defined as from time to time giving the people the 
illusion of sovereignty, while the real effective 
ereignty lies in the hands of other concealed and 
irresponsible forces.... 
The foundation of Fascism is the conception of 
the State, its character, its duty, and its aim. Fascism 
conceives of the State as an absolute, in comparison 
with which all individuals or groups are relative, only 
to be conceived of in their relation to the State.... 
ITIhe Fascist State is itself conscious, and has itself 
a will and a personality.... For us Fxscists, the State is 
not merely a guardian, preoccupied solely with the 
duty of assuring the personal safety of the citizens; 
nor is it an organization with purely material aims, 
such as to guarantee a certain level of well-being and 
peaceful conditions oflife.... The State, as conceived 
of and as created by Fascism, is a spiritual and moral 
fact in itself.... The State is the guarantor of secu- 
rity, both internal and external, but it is also the cus- 
todian and transmitter of the spirit of the people, as 
it has grown up through the centuries in language, 
in customs and in faith.... 111t represents the im- 
manent spirit of the nation.. It is the State which 
educates its citizens in virtue, gives them a 
consciousness of their nusston, and welds them into 
unity.... It leads men from primiti&e tribal life to that 
highest expression of human pouer which is Empire. 

[Tlhe Fascist State... is not reactionary, but rc".'- 
olutionary, in that it anticipates the solution Of the 
universal political problems which elsewhere have to 
be settled in the political field by the rivalry of par- 
ties, the excessive power Of the Parliamentary regime 
and the irresponsibility of political assemblies; while 
it meets the problems of the economic field by a 
system of and in the moral field en- 
forces order, discipline, and obedience to that which 
is the determined moral code of the country. Fas- 
cism desires the State to be a stmng and organic body, 
at the same time reposing upon broad and popular 
support.... The Fascist State organizes the nation, but 
leaves a sufficient margin of liberty to the individual; 
the latter is deprived of all useless and possibly harm- 
ful freedom, but retains what is essential; the deciding 
power in this question cannot be the individual, but 
the State alone. The Fascist State is not indifferent to 
the fact of religion in general, or to that particular 
syndicalism: federations of trade unions under state 
direction. 
and positive faith which is Italian Catholicism. The 
State professes no theology, but a morality, and in the 
Fascist State religion is considered as one ofthe deep- 
est manifestations of the spirit of man, thus it is not 
only respected but defended and protected. 
For Fascism the growth of Etnpire, that is to say 
the expansion of the nation, is an essential manifes- 
tation Of Vitality, and its opposite a sign Of deca— 
dence. Peoples which are rising, or rising again 
after a period of decadence, are always imperialist; 
any renunciation is a Sign Of decay and Of death. 
Fascism is the doctrine best adapted to represent 
the tendencies and the aspirations of a people, like 
the people Of Italy, Who are rising again after many 
centuries of abasement and foreign servitude. But 
Empire demands discipline, the coordination of all 
forces and a deeply felt sense of duty and sacrifice: 
this fact explains... the necessarily severe measures 
which must be taken against those who would 
oppose this spontaneous and inevitable movement 
of Italy in the twentieth century... for never before 
has the nation stood more in need of authority, of 
direction, and of order. 