

Deathbed confessions of a 'Trust' agent

Dino Grandi was one of the "Quadriviri" who, together with Benito Mussolini, carried out the 1922 March on Rome that brought Fascism to power in Italy. Later, Grandi served as Mussolini's foreign minister, justice minister, and ambassador to London. In 1943, he led an effort to oust Mussolini, in order to save Fascism. He was interviewed before his recent death by Gian Giacomo Migone for the nationally circulated Italian daily, *Corriere della Sera*, which serialized the interview posthumously on July 18, 19, and 20.

By Grandi's account, it was Salvatore Contarini, scion of the Sicilian branch of one of the most powerful Venetian oligarchical families, who suggested to Mussolini that Grandi be put into the foreign ministry. Contarini, who directed the foreign ministry from 1912 to 1924, "suggested my name, and so [the diplomats of the ministry] went to Mussolini to tell him they needed a new undersecretary," Grandi reported.

In 1929, Grandi related, "after Contarini resigned, I was tired, and I told Mussolini I wanted an embassy. Mussolini sarcastically replied, 'You will want Paris.' I replied no, that I wanted to go to Moscow. 'And why Moscow?' he asked me. 'Because I want to see clearly the Russian Revolution, and I don't accept the cliché put out by the Western bourgeoisie. To me the Russian Revolution is nothing but the chrysalis, the matrix of a nationalistic revolt in Asia.' At the time, it seemed particularly strange. Then Mussolini told me, 'You will be foreign minister within a week.' . . . After Pitt, I was the youngest foreign minister that Europe had had in 200 years."

Grandi went on to boast in his interview, "I was the first to have introduced the Russians into Italy, and I was the first to have the courage to bring Litvinov to Milan, because Mussolini did not give permission to bring him to Rome. Anyway, I am a follower of pro-Russian policy. We are in Europe, and here the potential unifier is Russia. Charlemagne did not succeed, Charles V, Louis XIV, the Kaiser, and Hitler did not succeed; there is no doubt that the closest to achieving European unity are the Russians."

Grandi described Mussolini's personal weaknesses of character: "Mussolini passed from Milan to Rome with a great desire to act like a respectable person, but he had this crowd of squadristi in his wake which bothered him enormously, who believed in the revolution, while he did not want to make one." And further: "He wanted to act respectable, but he was always a bozo. . . . In reality he was uncouth. . . . At the beginning he was very well spoken of, because he had started out by saying that we had to pay our debts to America, a big deal. . . ."

When the U.S. Coolidge administration tried to force the Europeans to pay their debts, most European states resisted. But in Italy, "Along comes Mussolini who wanted to look respectable. [Giuseppe] Volpi [di Misurata—Mussolini's finance minister and chief political operative of the Venetian oligarchy], the old pirate, did not want to pay. Mussolini, on the other hand, was unaware of the big economic and financial advantage of acting the part of a debtor who pays. Mussolini understood nothing of economics, but he repeated, 'I have to look good to America; I have to put Italy with its new regime into a situation of moral credit.'

"At the end, by saying we weren't there to get easy terms or to ask for money, we got everything we wanted. . . . America's financial support to Italy in the years from 1924 to 1929, slowed down the repercussions in Italy of the 1929 world crisis."

what is called in German a *Giftzwerg* (poisonous dwarf), the weak personality type who, as figurehead, tends to be the type of some among the world's worst tyrants.

Finally, he is eminently politically expendable. Were he elected, when his dirty work as a figurehead is completed in 1992, he would leave office as one of the most hated public figures in the history of the United States, such that perhaps former President Jimmy Carter would not touch him with a 10-foot pole.

Great men become more kindly in the degree their power and influence is increased. It is the oppressed underdog who must fight bitterly against injustice; the great man in a position of power treats his defeated opponents kindly, and never uses power to settle neurotic's personal grudges. With the approach of 1989, our nation and the world are entering into a period of the most dangerous crises in the modern history

of this planet. The next President will be confronted by a complex of grave emergencies like no other President of this century. It is from that vantage-point that an objective assessment of the mental health of the next President must be made.

References

1. *Dukakis: An American Odyssey*, by Charles Kenney and Robert L. Turner (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988); *Dukakis: The Man Who Would Be President*, by Richard Gaines and Michael Segal (New York: Avon Books, 1987).
2. According to a July 23 report in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Kirk told a meeting of state delegation leaders, "Think of the convention as a four-day mini-series on television, with the delegates as the live studio audience."
3. Chief Soviet arms negotiator, Viktor Karpov quoted in the *Washington Post* on July 28, 1988.